

# IN THESE TIMES

American comedy  
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50 Cents

## COAL WINTER

*Why the coal strike of 1978 may be the most important of the decade and an inquiry into its historical context.*

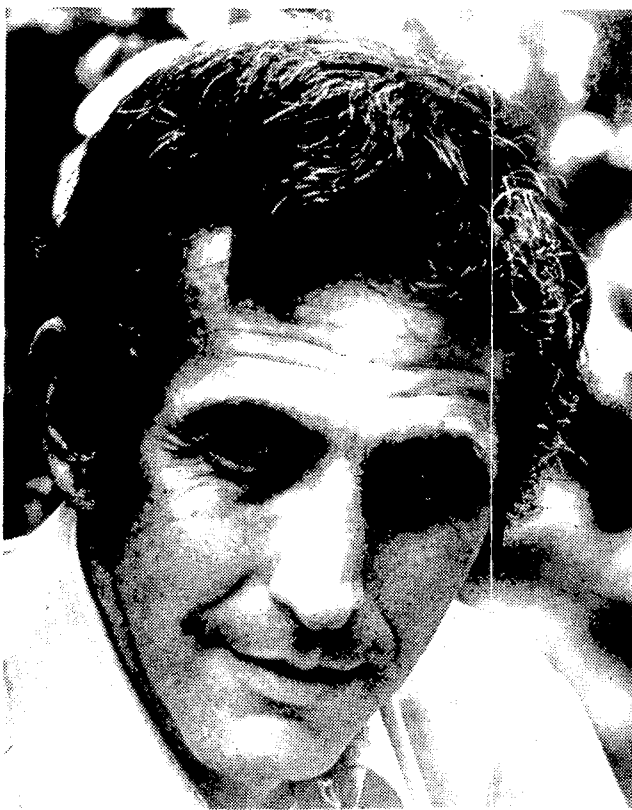


### SPECIAL 8-PAGE SECTION



# THE INSIDE STORY

JOHN JUDIS



Daniel Ellsberg

## "Presidents are the problem"

Dan Ellsberg knew America's nuclear strategy first hand from '58 to '63 and has followed it closely ever since. He believes a first-strike against the Soviet Union has "never looked very promising to our civilian planners." Nuclear weapons, he says, have had a different strategic function: except for a brief period in the Kennedy administration when conventional forces were emphasized, nuclear weapons have been seen as a "crucial backup" to conventional warfare against countries that do not have nuclear weapons themselves—North Korea, North Vietnam, Cambodia.

The arms race with the Soviet Union has played an important role. If the U.S. had nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union, American planners could assume that the Soviets would be unwilling to precipitate a two-sided nuclear exchange should we use nuclear weapons against one of the Soviet's allies.

When the Soviet Union, reeling from the Cuban and Berlin crises and rocked by the American bombing in Vietnam, undertook a crash program that attained rough nuclear equality with the U.S., a debate inside and outside of the American defense establishment ensued. Should the U.S. try to regain its superiority, as Ford's Defense Secretary James Schlesinger argued and as the Committee for the Present Danger maintains today, or should it forswear superiority and seek to eliminate nuclear weapons as an instrument of war?

Carter has at times been pitted against the Present Dangerites. He appointed Paul Warnke, a noted dove, as his arms control negotiator. He called at the U.N. for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In his present budget, he seemed to hearken back to Kennedy's strategy of emphasizing conventional over nuclear forces ("U.S. Decides Not to Imitate Soviet First-Strike Efforts," a *New York Times* headline read.)

But in his interview with me, Ellsberg vehemently challenged the idea that the Carter administration had abandoned the traditional American nuclear policy—or quest for nuclear superiority.

### The neutron bomb.

"Carter talks about abolishing nuclear weapons," Ellsberg told me, "but he proposes adding to our nuclear forces not only an increased number of vehicles, but also new types of weapons, the Cruise missile, the Trident submarine, and an entirely new category, the neutron bomb."

Ellsberg sees the plan to proceed with the neutron bomb, in the face of considerable opposition, as signi-

fying Carter's real intent. "It is a weapon designed only for first use," Ellsberg explained. "Look at its properties: precision, a well-defined killing radius, and the fact that it doesn't blow buildings down and kills only people, and doesn't leave as much longlasting radiation as other nuclear weapons."

"None of these properties offer any advantage if the adversary has already used dirty nuclear weapons. They are only of advantage when you are using them before the adversary has."

Ellsberg scoffs at the Carter administration's professed motives for neutron bomb development—to repel a Russian tank invasion of Western Europe. "It would be unusually imprudent to use it against the Russians," Ellsberg said. "It does not kill immediately, but over a period of hours to weeks or months of agony. To make walking dead of a Russian tank division that has tactical nuclear weapons would be extremely imprudent."

Ellsberg contends that "even within the terms of the Pentagon, neutron bombs could only meaningfully be used against opponents who did not have nuclear weapons. Against such opponents they are far more usable than any previous nuclear weapon."

They are the counterinsurgency weapon *par excellence*, for use where "you have great concern for some of the civilian population, and where you want to live in its buildings and exploit its resources." They would have been ideal during the Vietnam war.

### War at sea.

But what about Carter's buildup of conventional forces and his seeming lack of emphasis on gaining nuclear superiority over the Russians?

"Nothing I've said is incompatible with his wanting more conventional forces," Ellsberg replied. "Nobody wants to start a nuclear war these days. To pursue an interventionist policy, you start with conventional weapons, you try to achieve your objectives with them."

According to Ellsberg, Carter is seeking "soft [conventional] forces capable of joining a local conflict before outsiders, such as the Soviet Union, have joined it." In this respect, he is returning to the Kennedy concept of airborne divisions capable of counterinsurgency around the world.

But there are inherent limitations to such a strategy. "The day after American troops arrive, they may be stronger than anyone else in the area. But they are dropping into somebody else's country, and within weeks, they will risk being confronted with much larger forces. We are creating an ability to project Khe Sahns all over the world, and you do that with any confidence only if you are willing to defend them with nuclear weapons. We have to be able to say: 'If you want to make this a big fight, we are going to defend our forces with nuclear weapons.'"

Carter does understand that "there is no way for him to get a first strike capability over the Soviet Union for the next year or number of years. So in the short run he is going for a conventional intervention capability, which he hopes will be adequate without the backup of nuclear weapons."

But according to Ellsberg that is not his long run objective. He is "building a base" for the U.S. to be able to back up its conventional capabilities with the neutron bomb and with overall nuclear superiority.

Ellsberg believes that American defense planners are relying on the development of anti-submarine warfare, a scientific enterprise that is being conducted without fanfare. Both sides are now almost able to destroy each other's landbased missiles, Ellsberg explained. "The real factor is the sea. The Russians have no capability to knock out our submarine forces, but against the Russian force, we will have the ability."

According to Ellsberg, American satellite and com-

puter technology has given us an insurmountable lead over the Russians in anti-submarine warfare, and he expects that within five or ten years the U.S. will be able to detect and destroy Russian submarines. "In the event of a nuclear war that doesn't mean a capability to avoid large damage on our part, but to keep it down to a tenth of what the Soviets would suffer."

With such superiority, the U.S. could once again contemplate the use of nuclear weapons around the world without Soviet retaliation.

Ellsberg believes that Carter has deliberately downplayed this quest for strategic superiority. "The project for superiority is long term. There is no need to get the Congress and the public riled up by a lot of crash efforts this year or next because it really won't make any difference. It is no advantage to say we are going to acquire such a capability long before we have it. On the contrary, that alerts the opponent to what they may have to do."

### SALT a hoax.

Ellsberg puts no value on the SALT negotiations. He sees SALT as "essentially a hoax, a cover, a distraction for increases in the arms race." From what he has seen of the SALT agreement presently being discussed with the Soviet Union, it is "of very little interest. It doesn't significantly reduce U.S. or Russian forces. It creates a ceiling on those forces in certain respects while permitting great increases in other respects."

Ellsberg doesn't see much hope for change from within the Carter administration. He would have expected Paul Warnke "to be in the forefront of opposition to the neutron bomb, but I heard him recently stating that he could see no reason why neutron bombs would be more likely to be used than any other nuclear weapons."

"That means he has become incapable of following reasons that would have been clear to him a year ago," Ellsberg said. "It illustrates once more the 'Ellsberg principle,' which I discovered after many years of working at the Pentagon, that anyone can be as dumb as he has to be in order to keep a job."

While Ellsberg's goal of ending the threat of nuclear war has not changed since the '50s, his view of how to achieve it has. He used to believe that "only the President had the will and ability to change our policy." But he has come to see that "presidents are part of the problem, and only the public is going to change this course."

Ellsberg believes that "there has always been a difference between the majority of the public and the majority of people at high levels in the national security establishment." For the public, "the idea of initiating nuclear war is absolutely unacceptable." But the "corporate businessmen and lawyers, bankers and military people who staff the high levels of government have always been much more willing to contemplate the threat of actual initiation of nuclear war. That is the difference that has led to this policy of secrecy and deception."

Ellsberg is presently working with the Mobilization for Survival, a peace organization committed to abolishing nuclear weapons. Mobe's purpose, according to Ellsberg, is "not to change the values of the public but to alert them to what is really happening."

Does Ellsberg think American policy can be changed in this way? "There is a real chance," he said. "I base this not on conjecture, but on the actual experience of ending the Vietnam war. It seemed unlikely that it could be ended democratically, but it was, and that was the only way it could have been ended."

For further reading on American nuclear policy, and anti-submarine warfare in particular, see Robert C. Aldridge, *The Counterforce Syndrome*, TNI publications, 1901 Q St. NW, Washington, DC 20009, \$2.50.

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# Search for a California coalition

Holtus/Daniel Hunter

By Chuck Sherman

OAKLAND, CALIF.

**T**HE LEADERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC party have been seduced by the corporate structure," John Henning told the enthusiastic crowd at the Leanington Hotel here. "Our only alternative is a coalition between the labor movement and the other progressive movements."

With these words the head of California's AFL-CIO kicked off the third annual California Conference on Alternative Public Policy (CCAPP). Nearly 1,000 activists gathered February 17-19 to help build that progressive coalition and to develop its programmatic platform.

The increased participation of organized labor was a major goal, and the major success, of this year's conference. Labor is moving toward a coalition strategy in California and perhaps at the national level because of its frustration with the business-oriented policies of labor-endorsed Democrats.

The inability to resolve internal organizational problems was the major failure of this year's conference. The CCAPP has an ill-defined structure and a high turnover of staff and volunteers. With the organization lacking stability and continuity, conditions exist where serious disputes could and did arise.

The conference agenda included speeches by Rep. Ron Dellums, Campaign for Economic Democracy (CED) leader Tom Hayden and Dorothy Healey of the New American Movement. Although this was a conference devoted to working "within the system," the audience responded most passionately when speakers referred to the militant tactics of the 1960s and appealed to a socialist vision.

The conference offered nearly 70 workshops on both issues and skills, with a special emphasis on the problem of unemployment. The workshops were of uneven quality; most were reported to be excellent but some lacked definition and punch. Many workshop convenors ignored the theme of jobs and so the workshops as a whole lacked a unifying focus.

The cultural events were outstanding. Jane Fonda and the Teatro Ensemble delighted the crowd with a satirical skit. Country Joe McDonald and the Out of Hand Band provided the dance music, with Joe's mother Florence McDonald, the Berkeley City Auditor, leading the way to the dance floor. El Teatro Campesino contributed the high quality musical entertainment that they've been performing since they formed during the Delano farmworkers strike in 1965. And to top it all off, the Bread and Puppet Theater dropped by after a Berkeley engagement for an impromptu performance.

## Conference of activists.

Although most of the participants were middle class whites, an effort had been made to attract minorities by hiring a Third World outreach staffperson and by including prominent minority leaders as speakers and workshop convenors. But these decisions were apparently made too late to overcome the impression in Third World communities that this was a "white" event.

The overwhelming majority of the attendees were activists in left liberal or socialist organizations or in Alinsky-style community organizations. Few members of the mass base of the 200 organizations represented came.

The CCAPP is affiliated with the National Conference on Alternative State and Local Public Policies. Its executive director, Lee Webb, was in Oakland for the conference.

"What we're trying to do politically is to push progressives into being very concrete programmatically," Webb said. "We believe that 'structural reforms' are politically possible now."

Webb explained that by "structural reforms" he meant reforms that undermine the monopoly capitalist system by redistri-



## Rep. Dellums talked to more than 1,000 people gathered for the Alternative Public Policy Conference.

buting income and democratizing the economic system.

In the Bay Area Rep. Dellums calls this strategy "coalition politics" or the "movement of the 1980s." Tom Hayden and the CED call it "economic democracy."

Despite its many names, these anti-corporate movements share a common strategy: to build a progressive coalition behind transitional programs that run counter to the logic of capitalism and yet do not embrace a comprehensive socialist alternative.

## Organizational disputes.

In California the CED and the CCAPP are the main statewide organizational vehicles for this strategy. A struggle has developed in the last several months to determine which will serve as the organizational umbrella for the progressive coalition.

Specifically, the question is whether the alternative policy conference is an event organized and dominated by CED or whether CED is an essentially equal member organization of the CCAPP, the conference sponsor.

Last year's conference in Santa Barbara was a CED-dominated event. This

year, because those who volunteered to organize the conference felt that CED domination limited widespread progressive participation, the conference was the effort of a coalition of groups and individuals. Last year's conference had the theme of economic democracy; this year that phrase was purposely left out of the conference slogan.

The lack of a clear structure and a stable staff for the CCAPP has allowed the conflict to drag on and worsen. The coalition politics strategy in California is being hindered until the CCAPP structure is stabilized and this dispute is settled.

The dispute with other individuals and organizations within the alternative policy network is not the only problem that CED faces. Since its founding a little more than a year ago, CED has travelled a rocky road.

Membership is up to 800, organized in 22 chapters. There are 18 paid organizers on the staff. These are impressive first-year growth figures, but the primary thrust of the last year, involvement in electoral campaigns, has produced few successes.

CED-backed candidates have lost with such regularity that the organization has

reportedly pulled back from its electoral strategy. The emphasis now is on base-building and pushing CED's popular and well-known SolarCal proposal.

## Pessimistic speech.

The conference ended with an emotional, rambling, but very effective speech by Tom Hayden.

He captivated the packed audience by recounting his recent meeting with President Carter in the White House. Hayden suggested to the President that an indicator of the lack of democracy in the U.S. is that "the head of a large multinational corporation has more power than the President of the United States."

"I believe you're right," Carter responded. "I've learned that the last 12 months."

With the anecdotes finished, Hayden turned to the prospects and problems of the coalition politics strategy. But he was in a "strange" mood, with "a troubled heart and a confused mind about the tasks ahead."

Try as he might, Hayden couldn't keep the tone of pessimism out of his speech. He worried about the usefulness of the conference: "If we're not careful, we're going to get old having conferences remembering the '60s."

Then, catching himself, he tried to shift to a more positive note by pointing to the successful struggles of disabled people to gain fundamental rights. But even this was more negative than positive: "What kind of country is it where disabled people need to occupy HEW offices to gain human rights?"

Hayden took his audience back and forth through his cycle of hope and despair. Unable to find the optimistic theme he clearly wanted, he finally ended his speech abruptly and sat down. The crowd gave him a standing ovation.

Undoubtedly part of what was bothering Hayden came out at the CED caucus following the final conference session. Some CED people, most vocally Jane Fonda, were angry and felt that the conference was a "failure" because the conference staff was "anti-CED" and had allowed CED an insufficient role.

At the same time the conference Planning and Continuations Committee was holding a post-conference meeting to discuss the future of the conference. While a majority leaned toward supporting the organization of a conference next year, there were many unresolved issues, most especially what CED's role would be. A meeting is scheduled for March 11 to decide the future of the CCAPP.

■ *Chuck Sherman is a free-lance writer in the Bay Area.*



## IN THE NATION



Ken Frestone

## Labor must decide priorities on energy says Commoner

**L**ABOR UNIONS MUST ABANDON their reliance on corporate executives, government officials and even environmentalists and develop their own energy program if they want to guarantee full employment in a stable economy and healthy environment, Barry Commoner told a conference on Jobs and the Environment called by the Canadian Labor Congress in late February.

Labor must not drift but make a choice, and the only plan that meets labor's needs is a solar strategy, with government holding down the price of conventional fuels while using public funds to speed the adoption of already feasible solar technologies, Commoner, author of *The Poverty of Power* and director of the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems at Washington University, told the gathering of labor leaders and environmentalists.

Commoner specifically criticized labor unions for accepting the industrialists' arguments that the choice is either business plans for nuclear power, coal conversion, shale oil development and other capital-intensive projects or no energy at all. "All energy sources and ways of using energy in production are not alike in their effects on jobs, inflation and economic stability—and therefore on the interests of labor. Yes, some forms of energy must be available if production and the economy are to continue—if goods are to be produced and if people are to have jobs and afford to buy what they need. But it makes a big difference which form of energy is chosen to support production, and how it is used," Commoner explained.

"Resolutions have been passed by labor groups that in one place strongly urge a fight for jobs and against inflation, and elsewhere urge the development of all forms of energy, listing sources such as nuclear power and coal conversion—which are bound to do employment and inflation more harm than good—alongside solar energy, which is labor's most powerful weapon against energy-driven inflation and unemployment," he continued.

"If labor is to win its fight for jobs, for reasonable prices, for decent working conditions and for a strong economy, it must accept the responsibility of deciding, for itself, which forms of energy and which ways of using it will best sustain these aims. Up to now these decisions have not been made by labor, but by management. And now that management's choices—for nonrenewable sources such as oil and

capital-intensive sources such as nuclear power, rather than the solar alternative—have precipitated the energy crisis, the decisions are being made by government executives and legislators. But, again, labor is on the sidelines."

There is also an important choice about how to move to solar energy. "One option is deliberately to increase the price of conventional energy, so that solar technologies will become more quickly competitive," Commoner said, but that would feed inflation, disrupt the economy, hurt the poor most and benefit them least while benefiting the existing energy companies with windfall profits and an opportunity to control the introduction to solar technology.

"The other [option] is to hold down the price of conventional energy as much as possible and use public funds to cut the cost of solar alternatives and make them competitive," Commoner told the several hundred people at the conference. "Labor and the nation need an approach that permits rational planning of the development, testing and introduction of solar technologies in keeping with their efficacy in the overall process of transition rather than on the basis of the narrow criterion of profitability. This approach would, of course, challenge the widely fostered notion that private profit is the sole acceptable basis for new productive investments."

A solar strategy—using collectors for heating space and water, photovoltaic cells (see *IN THESE TIMES*, Feb. 15), methane gas or alcohol from biological waste (*IN THESE TIMES*, Feb. 22), crops or trees, wind power and other technologies—could provide two to four times as many jobs for a given investment as construction of new electrical generating plants, Commoner argued.

If the decision for sun power is not made soon, Japanese photovoltaics and Italian cogeneration units will soon capture not only the North American market but also the world market, freezing the U.S. and Canada "out of a good chunk of the enormous world-wide industrial transformation that is certain to take place under the impetus of the energy crisis."

"Labor has the most to lose from the wrong decisions, and the most to gain from the right ones..." Commoner concluded. "Only labor has the political strength to break the corporate stranglehold on energy and to help society apply the power of public governance to the creation of a new energy system that can truly serve human welfare."

## Regional energy plan stirs controversy in Northwest

By David Mathiason

SEATTLE

**U**TILITIES, INDUSTRY AND consumers in the energy-rich Pacific Northwest are currently battling over outlines of the nation's first regional power plan. Critics of the plan have charged that it is a giveaway to the aluminum and nuclear power industries and an effort to displace public utilities from their favored position in the region.

Controversy centers around the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Supply and Conservation Act, a proposal developed by a coalition of public and private utilities and aluminum industry representatives. The plan would increase the cost of power for public utilities and give private utilities a greater share of the region's cheap hydro-electric energy, thus slowing the pace of rate increases for investor-owned companies.

The area's energy-hungry aluminum industry would also have increased access to hydropower that would reduce their reliance on expensive thermal and nuclear power in the future. Nuclear and thermal plant construction would be given a boost by a provision requiring the Bonneville Power Administration—which markets the power from the network of dams on the Columbia River—to buy power from these sources regardless of cost or efficiency of the installations.

An alternative plan has been put forward by Rep. Jim Weaver (D-OR) that emphasizes conservation over construction of new generating capacity. According to the Weaver plan no new thermal or nuclear plant could be built unless it was shown to be more cost-effective than an investment in conservation. Also his proposal would give priority to consumers in allocating the cheapest power—whether they purchase from public or private utilities. This would replace the current "preference clause," which gives public utilities priority in allocation of the region's hydropower.

### Yardstick for private power.

In 1937, when the Bonneville Power Administration was created, President Franklin Roosevelt, along with many Pacific Northwest residents, was a strong advocate of publicly owned power. He saw to it the Bonneville Power Act included a clause requiring the federal agency to "give preference and priority in the use of electric energy to public bodies and co-operatives." Roosevelt wanted low public utility rates to serve as a "yardstick" by which consumers could measure the advantages of public power over private power.

However, not all residents in the area saw the question so clearly. In the state of Washington public utilities are strongest, carrying about two-thirds of total load. The figures are almost exactly reversed in Oregon, where 63 percent of total energy needs are met by private utilities. In Idaho private utilities are even stronger with 85 percent of total load serviced by investor-owned companies.

In general, users in Oregon and Idaho paid more for electricity than those in Washington but the situation was tolerable. As long as all of the users in the region were assured access to hydropower there was little complaint.

The energy situation in the Pacific Northwest was so favorable that the aluminum industry was attracted to the area during World War II. Very large quantities of energy are consumed in the production of aluminum so availability of cheap power is a major consideration in location decisions for the industry.

Arrival of the aluminum industry and increasing population forced construc-

tion of additional dams on the Columbia River until the current total of 30 such facilities was reached.

By the late '60s the regional power outlook began to shift fundamentally. All of the economically and ecologically feasible dam sites on the Columbia had been developed. The days of plentiful and cheap energy for all were passing and future demand would have to be met by nuclear, oil and coal power plants that can be ten times as expensive as hydropower.

By 1973 the needs of preferred public utilities were so great the BPA could no longer offer private utilities "firm" or guaranteed contracts for federal hydropower. The situation came to a head in June 1976 when the BPA notified the public utilities it could not meet their projected load growth beyond 1983. Pacific Northwest aluminum companies also received distressing news from the agency. The BPA announced it would not renew their contracts as they expired in the 1980s and 1990s.

It was against this backdrop that the Pacific Northwest Utilities Conference Committee met and hammered out the regional power plan. The proposed legislation offered something for everybody, although benefits weren't equally distributed.

The aluminum companies would get some of the cheap hydropower they claim is essential if they are to remain in the region.

The private utilities would get hydropower and a guarantee for any thermal or nuclear power plants they might build. Nuclear power plants in particular are a shaky proposition economically and investors are reluctant to back them. The proposed regional plan's requirement that the BPA purchase power from any new plants would make them a more attractive investment. Utilities developing new plants could expect lower interest rates as a result.

### Worries about availability.

Benefits for public utilities of the power plan are less apparent. Their rates would increase because they would have to share hydropower and purchase some of their load from a "pool" that would include hydropower "blended" with more expensive thermal and nuclear power. Public utility participation in drafting of the plan reflected worries about availability of power in the future and a belief that rate disparities are so great within the region now that the preference clause cannot be retained.

This is a realistic attitude since in some neighboring communities private utility customers pay nearly twice what public utility customers pay. This has been a specially touchy point in Oregon where the state legislature passed a law to place all utilities, including investor-owned ones, under a public authority by 1979. Even if the preference clause is retained Oregon utilities could go to the BPA for cheaper power as members of a public body.

Although the proposal may have looked good to the interests that drafted it, important segments of the public were less enthusiastic. The regional power plan came under attack as a giveaway to industry and the private utilities. Also, citizens objected to the lack of public participation in developing the proposal and in future energy planning. The PNUCC proposal would create a planning body composed of utilities without members of the public or elected representatives as voting participants.

### Conservation alternative.

Critics, Rep. Weaver prominent among them, have argued for a re-orientation

Continued on page 5.



## PRISONS

# Medical care in pen criticized

By Marc Levinson

**I**N JULY 1975 DALE VINSON WAS OPERATED on for hemorrhoids. The operation, Vinson says, will leave him bleeding for life. Vinson, a convicted bank robber, is one of 2,160 inmates at the U.S. Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta. "The medical treatment there is just about completely lacking," says Vinson's lawyer, Ralph Goldberg. "What there is is a systematic denial of medical treatment. We're not talking about individual cases of neglect. We're talking about a system set up there to deny inmates medical treatment."

Vinson has been on holdover status at the Atlanta penitentiary since 1973. He claims he was to be sent to the Fort Worth, Texas, penitentiary for alcoholism treatment. Atlanta penitentiary Warden Jack Hanberry says he knows nothing about Vinson's case.

Since 1974 Vinson has been in and out of the penitentiary hospital with hemorrhoids. In July 1975 he was operated on by Dr. John Woodhams, a staff surgeon.

According to several inmates, Woodhams' hands shake continually. An inmate who witnessed the operation as a medical aid states in a signed affidavit that Woodhams told him he clipped the wrong blood vessel, which would leave Vinson bleeding for life.

Vinson was later taken to a private hospital in Atlanta, where surgeons tried unsuccessfully to correct the mistake.

## Only one of many cases.

Vinson's case is one of many this reporter learned of during visits to the penitentiary, talks with lawyers and reading of court papers.

One prisoner, operated on this spring for a hernia, claims his left testicle is no longer visible and that doctors refuse to help him. "Since performance of the operation, I've suffered from acute pain," the inmate says.

Another inmate, Nathaniel Jeffers, claims the federal prison system transferred him from Terre Haute, Ind., to Lewisburg, Pa., for heart treatment. When Lewisburg was unable to treat him, they sent him to Atlanta, where prisoners with heart problems are treated at Grady Memorial Hospital. A friendly doctor put him in the prison hospital until he could be sent to Grady, Jeffers says, but when the physician left the Bureau of Prisons, penitentiary medical director Dr. Joseph Alderete removed him from the hospital, sent him back to Lewisburg and wrote in his file that Jeffers refused treatment.

After the National Prison Project, a Washington-based prisoner support group, intervened in his case, Jeffers was returned to Atlanta and treated—after a year of being bounced from one penitentiary to another.

Yet another inmate, James Lang, came to the Atlanta penitentiary with a history of back injury. Lang, a convicted bank robber, says Dr. Alderete called him a malingerer and refused him treatment. Eventually, Lang collapsed in a prison corridor from the pain. When 50 inmates surrounded him and threatened to riot, officials promptly sent Lang to the U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners in Springfield, Mo., for an operation.

The operation was successful but since his return to Atlanta, Lang claims, prison officials have attempted to keep him from doing the exercises prescribed by the doctors in Springfield.

Penitentiary officials refused to be interviewed regarding medical treatment at the prisons. Requests to inspect the prison hospital and to interview Dr. Alderete were denied.

In a written response to questions submitted in writing, Warden Jack Hanberry pointed out that the prison hospital was recently reaccredited by the Joint Com-



The Atlanta federal penitentiary (above) has been the target of many criticisms about inadequate medical care for prisoners.

mission on Accreditation of Hospitals, a national organization. The medical staff, he says, consists of five physicians, three dentists, a pharmacist and a psychologist, along with 50 local consulting specialists. Through an arrangement with Grady Memorial Hospital, the Atlanta penitentiary serves as the cardiac center for the entire federal prison system.

## Congressional consideration.

Health care throughout the federal prison system is now being discussed by the House of Representatives subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties and the Administration of Justice. The subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Robert Kastenmeier (D-WI), has asked the General Accounting Office to investigate the quality of health care in both state and federal prisons.

Subcommittee staff member Tim Boggs says he is uncertain whether the problems with health care exist throughout the federal prison system. "We get 100 letters a week from inmates and rarely

do I recall complaints as serious as that," Boggs says. "I think an effort has been made by the Bureau of Prisons to have relatively high-quality medical services, considering the fact they must use Public Health Service doctors. I'm not sure the problem is systemwide."

Al Bronstein, director of the National Prison Project, disagrees. "What you find there [in Atlanta], you find in most places," he says. "In fact, Atlanta's better than most. Most of the locations are so remote they have even less access to medical care. In places like Leavenworth, Ks., or Marion, Ill., or Terre Haute, Ind., they have a hard time getting good medical personnel, so they rely heavily on technicians. Most qualified people don't want to deal with prisoners for a very small salary when they can make more money on their own. You get doctors with foreign medical degrees or who can't pass the license exam."

The most common complaints the Prison Project gets, Bronstein adds, relate to the unavailability of special diets, dia-

betics not receiving insulin, overuse of drugs and failure to treat common problems such as high blood pressure.

On several occasions federal prisoners have sued the Bureau of Prisons to force medical treatment. "All litigation against this medical facility has been decided in favor of the medical facility," Atlanta's Warden Hanberry says.

However, according to both prison officials and court personnel, most prisoner suits are dealt with by a letter from the court to penitentiary officials asking for information or directing them to provide treatment. Often prisoners are able to get immediate relief from pressing medical problems in this way.

The court generally refuses to accept the suit unless the inmate has completed the prison system's six-months-long grievance procedure. No prisoner suit relating to medical treatment at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary has ever come to trial, so neither prisoners nor prison staff have been examined about the situation under oath.

# Energy plan

Continued from page 4.

of any regional plan in the direction of energy conservation. They contend that the utility forecasts of energy shortfalls that the PNUCC plan is based on err on the high side.

Weaver's bill would aggressively promote conservation through a Columbia Basic Energy Corporation that would replace the BPA. The Weaver plan would give purchasers of power ten years to ensure "every structure regularly accessible to the public and every residence within the service area of the purchaser is to be insulated, weatherized and provided with conservation devices" to reduce demand for electricity.

Cheap power would be allocated equally to residential users of the region under the Weaver plan. Power from private utilities might still be more expensive, but this would be due to their need to turn a profit and the more favorable tax laws that apply to public bodies. Public participation in running of the CBEC would be guaranteed by a board of directors

that would include representatives elected from Washington, Oregon and Idaho/Montana with two additional members appointed by the President.

At this point the future of regional energy planning in the Pacific Northwest is uncertain. It is unlikely that either of the two major plans will be adopted without modification. Some compromise will have to be worked out by interested parties in the region and legislators at the federal level. Regional representatives in Congress have generally been noncommittal on the issue.

However, some points of a likely compromise can be specified. Public utilities will have a difficult time holding on to their historical preferred position. Continued rate disparities will predictably raise a howl from private utility customers over unfair advantages enjoyed by one class of consumers.

Whatever plan is adopted will probably contain greater provision for public participation than is contained in the PNUCC legislation. This was a particular point of controversy in regional hearings conducted by Rep. Lloyd Meeds (D-Wash.). (Meeds himself came under fire for a lack of openness in his hearings.)

Finally, there will probably be an in-

creased reliance on conservation measures to reduce demand, even if the stringent measures advocated by Weaver are not enacted into law. The city of Seattle, for instance, has called for stronger conservation measures as an alternative to building new generating capacity.

Although the details of any future compromise are uncertain, there is considerable impetus for development of some plan and fairly soon. the BPA's new administrator, Sterling Munro, has argued for a compromise on the grounds that "if we do nothing then factions will keep tearing and scratching at each other." Munro knows little about management of electricity but he does know politics, having served as leading assistant to Sen. Henry Jackson, chairman of the Senate's Energy Committee.

At least some additional tearing and scratching is likely before a final plan emerges because the allocation of energy resources touches every individual and group in the region. If various factions are unable to reach a regional compromise the energy future of the Pacific Northwest may be decided in Washington, D.C.

David Mathiason is a free-lance writer in Seattle.



## IN THE WORLD

## GREAT BRITAIN

# Thatcher casts racist shadow over coming vote

By Mervyn Jones

LONDON

**C**ONSERVATIVE LEADER Margaret Thatcher has made a desperate decision. She has become increasingly worried by the Labour government's recovery since it was in bad trouble a year ago, by Prime Minister James Callaghan's imperturbable style, and by the difficulty of finding an issue that clearly divides the parties. Now she has opted for an appeal to racism.

It isn't called racism, of course; it's called "the immigration issue." But the years have rolled on since the immigration happened, and successive restrictions have reduced the current inflow to a trickle. Of the two million people of black or Asian descent now living in Britain, more than half were born here. The real issue is whether or not they are to be accepted as equal citizens.

On Jan. 30 Mrs. Thatcher was interviewed on a peak-time television program. British people, she announced, are afraid of being "swamped by people of an alien culture." The word "swamped" is patently emotive, since blacks and Asians make up only 3.3 percent of the population and demographic forecasts—allowing for a higher birth-rate of mainly young families—don't project this beyond a maximum of 5 percent in the 1990s. Bradford, the nearest to being "swamped" of our industrial towns, has a 20 percent minority population.

What is needed, Thatcher went on, is "a clear prospect of an end to immigration." The fact is that 28,000 blacks or Asians entered Britain in 1977, as against 26,000 white people from such countries as Canada and Australia, who presumably aren't alien in culture. This doesn't include the Irish, who are traditionally allowed in without passports, or west Europeans who gained free rights of migration when Britain joined the European community.

Most of the 28,000 are dependents—

wives, children or aging parents — of men settled here. Some are Asians who had lived in Kenya or Uganda, never held citizenship of these African countries, and therefore retained British passports. The tiny (750, to be exact) number of new immigrants consists of individuals qualified by special skills, mainly doctors badly needed in our hospitals.

Labour and Tory governments have hitherto been agreed on admitting the dependents, and it was a Tory government that granted the right of entry to the Asians living in Uganda and Kenya when those nations became independent. To reverse these policies requires the breaking of clear pledges. Yet there is no other way of achieving an "end to immigration." Not surprisingly, Thatcher has ducked invitations to explain how that objective could be reached. There is supposed to be a Tory study group examining the problem.

In any case, since the growth of the black and Asian population now depends on natural increase rather than continued immigration, the only real way to avoid it is to make the people resident here pack their bags and go. Enoch Powell, the maverick politician who has built a reputation on the race issue, urges voluntary repatriation with money incentives. The National Front stands for compulsory expulsion. Either course means a clear declaration that the blacks and Asians are not wanted here. Thatcher has yet to take such a line, but logic—the logic of bidding for the votes of the British people who hate the sight of the blacks, and the logic of the "alien culture" phraseology—leads her in that direction.

## Charges of dirty politics.

Callaghan, naturally, has challenged Thatcher to say just what measures she proposes, and has charged that she is stirring up prejudice for its own sake. Mervyn Rees—the minister in charge of immigration—has attacked her in forthright terms. Speeches from Labour platforms resound with cries of "shameful," "dis-



Conservative party leader Margaret Thatcher

graceful," and "dirty politics."

In this response, there is a fair degree of hypocrisy. Callaghan himself, as Home Secretary in 1968, was the first to introduce immigration rules which discriminated on plainly racist grounds. Labour spokesmen, just as much as Tories, have advanced the theory that strict immigration controls can go hand in hand with equal treatment and good race relations within Britain—a patent illusion, since discrimination at the airport is a major grievance among blacks and Asians and instills in them an irrevocable feeling that they are second-class citizens.

This government has done just as much as its Tory predecessor to bring immigration down to the modest 28,000 mark. The wives and children, guaranteed entry in principle, often wait three years for actual permission and are not infrequently rebuffed if they fail to prove their identity to perfect satisfaction.

However, Callaghan has been delighted to don the mantle of virtue. His calculation, as usual, is shrewd. He is mobilizing genuine progressives in his own party, who had been highly critical of him on other issues.

Although Thatcher picked up some support in the polls, Callaghan may eventually be the gainer at the ballot box. Thatcher is bidding for the racist vote; but it is often outnumbered—especially in marginal inner-city districts—by the tolerant vote plus the vote of the blacks and Asians themselves.

## Tories split.

Callaghan has grasped a chance to divide the Tories. At least one ex-minister has publicly regretted Thatcher's statements, and others are known to be unhappy. "Tories Split on Race" is a front-page headline on the day I'm writing; we may be sure that it has helped Callaghan to enjoy his breakfast.

An unhappy man these days is William Whitelaw, Tory deputy leader. He is a country gentleman from the remote county of Cumberland, steeped in old traditions of decency and honesty. When the party leadership was at stake in 1975 he expected to secure it, but bungled his tactics and saw Thatcher snatch it from un-

der his nose. As "shadow" Home Secretary, he has the official responsibility of shaping Tory policy on immigration.

Reporters have established that Thatcher's words in the television interview came as a complete surprise to Whitelaw. Though she had made the recording five days earlier, she had avoided mentioning it to him, let alone consulting him in advance. Whitelaw is explicitly on record that his party will stand by the pledges to dependents and to Asians from Africa, and his position could become untenable if they are repudiated.

Amid the furor, he kept an appointment to address a club for citizens of Asian origin. To his distress, they refused to receive him and picketed the hall instead of going in to take their seats. TV viewers saw Whitelaw standing in the rain and pleading with the pickets, trying to convince them that the Tory party still stands for equal rights and equal treatment for all British citizens, regardless of race or creed.

Asked by a TV reporter what he thought of the alleged fear of white people being "swamped," he replied: "I don't accept for one moment that it's justified." Political history affords few examples of such a yawning gap between a party leader and a deputy leader.

The kindest interpretation that can be placed on Thatcher's motives is that she is trying to halt a drift of votes to the National Front. But, by putting herself in a position of competing with the Front—still a fringe group without a single MP—she has helped to bring it into the center of politics. She may also have hoped to extend a hand to Powell and induce him to return to the Tory fold; but he has made a frosty reply, saying that Tory policy won't satisfy him until it includes his nostrum of repatriation.

Thatcher has undoubtedly done harm to the fabric of British politics by raising the temperature of racial hostility and increasing the likelihood of a very dirty election. It may well be, however, that she has blundered too.

Mervyn Jones writes for the *New Statesman* and is *IN THESE TIMES*' correspondent in Great Britain.

## NEW YORK READERS

### An Evening of Song

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## EUROPE

## Eurocommunism in East Germany?

By Thomas Conrad

**A** CREATIVE AND UNDOGMATIC humanist reform communism is developing. The time of the communist feudal system is yielding to a renaissance and enlightenment that can once again win the confidence of the workers of Germany." With those words, Eurocommunism stepped out of the closet in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) when the recently formed "League of Democratic Communists" published its manifesto early in January.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the publication of the League's declaration was that it occurred at all. East Germany is one of the Soviet Union's best friends. The manifesto is not the first sign of dissent in the GDR but it represents a significant new trend. Much of the opposition in recent months has been isolated, and has focused primarily on civil liberties issues. The new opposition group is socialist. And according to *Der Spiegel*, which printed their statement, it comes from inside the East German Socialist Unity party. (SED). If *Der Spiegel* is right, this is the first time that middle and high-level SED functionaries have posed such a challenge to the status quo since the '50s when several Politburo members who pressed for reforms were removed for "fractional activity."

Members of the League remained anonymous because, as they gingerly put it, "circumstances do not permit a legal association." The document's uncompromising break with the official line insures that the League will continue to operate outside the law for some time to come.

**Sharpest salvoes at USSR.**

According to the SED dissidents, both the USSR and the U.S. are centers of global imperialism. Citing the USSR as a "chauvinistic superpower," the authors of the statement score the Soviet sponsored militarization of public life in East Europe. Real security, they say, depends upon both East and West Germany's withdrawal from the Warsaw and NATO alliances. UN guaranteed neutrality and eventually, complete disarmament should follow these initial steps.

The document fires some of its sharpest salvoes at the USSR. The Soviet working class, according to the opposition group, is "exploited by a parasitic caste of bureaucrats that expropriates the largest portion of the surplus value for itself." The Soviet party and state offer little, if anything, worth emulating, yet the GDR is one of the USSR's most loyal imitators.

The League contends that a form of "pseudosocialist late capitalism" has emerged in East Germany under Soviet tutelage. The current system, which masquerades as "Real Socialism," is actually designed to protect the privileges of the new class of bureaucrats and technocrats at the expense of German workers. The statement characterizes the GDR's economy as "organized chaos." Poor coordination and faulty planning cause shortages and waste human potential, say the dissidents.

The document explicitly disavows Lenin's concept of the party, its role in the state and his notion of democracy. Socialism with a human profile in the GDR will require the abandonment of democratic centralism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Instead, the dissidents call for party pluralism, free elections, and an independent parliament and judiciary. Democratic communists must strive for "a society in which all men can be brothers regardless of their *weltanschauung*," says the manifesto.

The League also recommends the abolition of censorship of the media and the publishing industry and calls for the publication of the works of Karl Liebknecht, co-founder of the Communist party of

Germany, whose writings have been suppressed.

**A reunified Germany.**

Perhaps the most shocking of the League's theses treats the "German Question." The authors call for a reunified Germany and in doing so, they tread into a subject area that has been taboo in East and West for years. Relaxed relations between the GDR and the Federal Republic are based on a de facto two-state concept that implicitly takes the partition for granted. Thus, the dissidents' enthusiasm for the idea of reunification seems strangely anachronistic.

Nevertheless, in anticipation of eventual unity under a popular front government, the SED faction proposes a number of practical steps. These include the convertibility of the GDR Mark, the registration of all political parties in both countries, cooperation between unions, cultural and social organizations and unhampered travel between East and West.

Public reaction to the manifesto in West Germany has been mostly limited to speculation about the authenticity of the document. Leaders in the Federal Republic are embarrassed by the declaration, and afraid that too much public debate about it will erode the delicate relations between the two countries. The SPD government wishes the League would go away. It is clear that the kind of cooperation between leftists in East and West that the manifesto calls for is a real threat to the West German government.

The manifesto came as a bombshell in the GDR and the government's reaction was swift and furious. The offices of *Der Spiegel* in East Berlin were shut down and accreditation for the magazine's correspondent was withdrawn; other western correspondents have been warned to tone down their reporting as well.

Efforts to discredit the manifesto have only been partially successful. Several hundred tape-recorded, handwritten and carbon copies are reportedly circulating

in the country and western visitors have been approached by curious citizens who are looking for copies.

In a country that is not known for its permissiveness, the far-flung, thorough public debate that the authors had hoped for is not likely to occur. The impact of the activities of the League of Democratic Communists will likely be more cumulative than cataclysmic in the GDR. Soviet interference in Hungary and Czechoslovakia has not been forgotten. Any sudden ascendance of a liberal wing of the SED to power or widespread defiance on the part of the populace could precipitate a crackdown or the kind of "fraternal assistance" from the Warsaw Pact that East Germany does not need.

Nevertheless, the SED is now under considerable pressure. Socialists in the GDR who are inclined to press for change now know that they have some friends in high places.

Thomas Conrad has traveled widely in East and West Germany.

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Mario Soares

## Portugal gets new government

By Kathleen Schwartzman

L I S B O N

**O**N MONDAY, JAN. 30, PRESIDENT Antonio Ramalho Eanes installed in power the Second Constitutional Government of Portugal. This Second Government replaces the first, which fell from power on Dec. 8 when it failed to obtain a vote of confidence from the Assembly of the Republic. The new government is headed again by Mario Soares and is comprised of ten ministers from the Socialist party (PS), three from the Social Democratic Center (CDS), and two independents.

The new government represents a coalition of a party of the left—a socialist party—with a party of the right—a non-socialist party. On Jan. 19 this coalition was formalized with a signing of an accord. Beyond the parliamentary majority that the two parties control, the accord sketches general political and economic points of agreement. These were outlined in a text of "Political Presuppositions" and two annexes, "Programs of Stabilization for 1978" and "Plan of Develop-

ment for the Middle Term."

This accord, and the explicit participation that it gives to the CDS in the policies of the government, continues to be protested by parties, unions and individuals. The other so-called Center party, Social Democratic party-Popular Democratic party (PSD/PPD), protested that a solution that combined such fundamentally different parties as the PS and CDS could not be a viable solution. Sousa Franco, speaking for the Social Democrats, said that his party had remained open to forming a more stable coalition among the "three democratic parties." Now, he said, the PSD/PPD would move into selective opposition.

The Communist party, through its Political Commission of the Central Committee, said that the Socialist party had an "historic" responsibility in opening the door of government to a party that had voted against the constitution, conducted a campaign against the institutions and democratic regime, and expressed the interests of monopoly capitalists—Portuguese and foreign, and of latifundists and imperialists.

Allegedly serving as basis for programs

of the future government, the "Political Presuppositions" included respect for the constitution, development of a politics of defense including participation in NATO, reform of public administration, and recognition of the importance of private initiative, and of foreign investment.

Points suggestive of the new political economy were outlined in the two annexes. Forecasted are reduction of the deficit of balance of payments, control of inflation at around 20 percent, growth of salaries to a maximum of 20 percent, realization of a national minimum salary and retirement payments, reduction of public expenses and subsidies, maintenance of purchasing power, price control and stimulation of investments leading to new jobs. In large part the measures anticipate the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund—budget equilibrium and restriction of credits. The Second Government has offered the re-opening of negotiations with the IMF as the way to overcome the financial and economic crisis of Portugal.

Kathleen Schwartzman is a graduate student in sociology doing research in Portugal.



## JAPAN

## New coalition may split the left



Prime Minister raises his arms to cheer at Liberal Democratic party convention in Tokyo last year.

By Phil Hill

HIROSHIMA

**T**HE POST-NEW YEAR CONVENTION of the Buddhist-based Clean Government party, Japan's third-largest political party, was the last of a series of important meetings by all of the country's major opposition parties over the last three months. Together with a major reshuffle of the leadership of the ruling Liberal Democratic party and the cabinet, the conventions are a part of major changes in the country's political scene.

In a sense, all the conventions were post-mortems of the last two elections—the Lower House election in December 1976 and last July's Upper House race. The two traditionally dominant forces, the rightist Liberal Democrats, accustomed to comfortable majorities in the Diet since its formation in 1955, was left with precarious 51 percent margins in both houses.

The major perennial opposition, the Socialist party, also suffered an erosion of its forces. The Communists lost half of their seats in each election, though more due to gerrymandering than to loss of support.

These losses were the gain of the newly-powerful centrist forces, most prominently of the Clean Government party, leading to speculation that the diverse parties of the center might merge and form a force that the Japanese business establishment would accept as an alternative to the Liberal Democrats. That possibility loomed as the major reality at all the opposition parties' conventions.

#### A merger of moderates.

Clean government leader Takeiri Yoshikatsu expressed the willingness of the party to form a "coalition with any party" (i.e., any party but the Communists), opening up the possibility that the moderates might help keep the Liberal Democrats in power even if, as appears likely, they fall below a majority in the Lower House. In its policy positions, too, the Clean Government party moved away from positions that disqualify it from government responsibility in the eyes of the ruling class, reversing its long-standing position against Japan's extra-legal military establishment and hinting strongly that it would not push too hard to imple-

## PART I



Kenji Miyamoto

ment its demand for an end to the alliance with the U.S.

The other major centrist grouping, the Democratic Socialist party, held its convention Nov. 28. Sasaki Ryosaku, its newly-elected leader, is more likely to co-operate with the Clean Government party.

"A small party like ours," he said, "must not try too hard to form an administration," indicating a willingness to concede leadership to the larger Buddhist party. All in all, his election is seen as opening the door to a coalition or merger of moderates, including right-wing members of the Socialist party.

#### Socialists divided.

Together with the Democratic Socialists, the Socialists hosted a meeting of the Socialist International, beginning Dec. 16. Two weeks before Willy Brandt, Francois Mitterand and Olaf Palme were scheduled to arrive at Haneda Airport, the SP still had no chairman.

Chairman Narita Tomomi had resigned in the wake of the July election setback, touching off a struggle within the party between the more numerous left-wing, which wanted to continue to operate with the Communists, and the right-wing, which threatened to leave the party unless the influence of the left were reduced. The infighting lasted all autumn, virtually crippling party activity.

The party failed even to run a candidate for governor of this prefecture in October. Finally, under pressure from Sohyo, the country's major union federation and the backbone of the party, the left-wing faction agreed to disband formally, as all

other factions already had done. In return, the right supported the nomination of Yokohama mayor Asukata Ichio to succeed Narita, and he was elected unanimously three days before the Second International meeting opened.

Asukata has a long reputation as a left-wing sympathizer, having won international recognition during the Vietnam war for barring from the streets of the world's third greatest port city tractor-trailers moving repaired tanks from an American supply base to the docks. However, he apparently is moving rightward in order to prevent the defection of any more Diet members from the party. Only one member of the old left-wing faction is among the five-member party leadership, and Asukata after his election dropped a bombshell on the left by stating that "a coalition that includes all the opposition is highly unrealistic."

Isolated by the other opposition parties and deprived of any bargaining chips it might have had before the elections, the CP could do little at its October convention but elect a slightly rejuvenated leadership that strengthened the hand of "Eurocommunist"-line party chairman Miyamoto Kenji. Pro-Soviet vice-chairman Hakamada Satomi was removed from the leadership, resulting in a vicious if somewhat comic-opera public battle between the two decades-long ex-comrades that involved far more personal attacks than politics. It served largely to mitigate any positive public effect that might have emerged from the party convention, and made the party look absurd. Hakamada was finally expelled from membership altogether on New Year's Eve.

#### Fukuda challenged.

If prime minister Fukuda Takeo thinks that the economy has improved enough to risk an election, he may call one this year, though he need not do so before the end of 1980. Asked about the possibility of a snap election, Kono Yohei, leader of the New Liberal Club, a small group of right-of-center defectors from the Liberal Democrats, said, "I don't think the Diet will be dissolved. However, Fukuda may be driven to dissolving the House if he faces some political crisis."

Den Hideo, the leader of a group of former SP right-wingers who are in the process of forming a tiny party called the Social-democratic Union, felt that

possibility was stronger: "It is possible that Fukuda will resign this year. It is likely that he will be forced to hold himself responsible for the failure of his economic policy." Both leaders seem to feel that the Liberal Democratic majority will disintegrate under the strain of some crisis. It is at least as likely, however, that the conservative would simply replace the prime minister, rather than risk an early election.

They'll have a chance to do that at year's end when Fukuda's term as party president expires. After Lockheed, the party badly needs to run a clean election, as opposed to the open bribery that has traditionally served to determine the party's choice. The Nov. 28 reshuffle of the cabinet and party leadership brought forth several prominent contenders for the top spot.

#### Turning from all parties.

No party can show a significant increase in popularity, and most have been declining. The voters are obviously turning away from all the parties, and the more new ones form, trying to tap into the uncommitted pool, the larger that pool becomes. Muto Ichio, a well-known leftist writer, said before the 1976 elections: "Although Lockheed has caused a decline in support for the Liberal Democrats, it has not resulted in any increase in support for the other parties."

He has been borne out by elections, polls and perception of public attitudes since that time. But in a time of international tension, the Liberal Democrat party can most credibly wrap itself in the flag and play on people's sense of international isolation to evoke a nationalistic response. Unlike Italy and France, the left cannot point to a vastly better record on the local level in areas where it has formed local governments.

"The roads and schools are just as bad in Yokohama as anywhere else," says internationally-known feminist Kitazawa Yoko, who lives there. And Asukata was regarded as the model left-wing mayor of the country. In an article in the Sunday magazine of the huge Asahi Newspaper, Asukata outlined his program, and it contained mainly vague platitudes, but virtually no concrete proposals of interest to the people. He has yet to show that he can lead the Socialists back from the depths to which they have sunk.

Whether or not there is a national election this year, important local races are coming up. In Yokohama, a new mayor will have to be elected to replace Asukata, who as a party chairman, will have to resign and try to get elected to the Diet. Feigning indignation over Asukata's "desertion of his people" in mid-term, the Clean Government party showed their strength by uniting a coalition of moderates around a liberal bureaucrat. The Liberal Democrats gleefully backed this candidate, and now the SP has decided to do so, too, rather than field a candidate of their own who would lose. In spite of this slap in the face in his own home town, a working-class bastion which will now be run by an epitome of the elite, Asukata is continuing to drift toward the moderates.

At the prefectural level, there will be ten gubernatorial elections this year, the most important ones in Tokyo and Kyoto. In the capital, Socialist governor Minobe Ryokichi is retiring. Joining the shift away from the CP, he recommended recently: "In light of the difficult relations with the CP, [the SP] should obtain the Clean Government party's understanding about its choice of a candidate [to replace himself]." Minobe's coalition last year lost its majority on the Tokyo Metropolitan Council.

In Kyoto, the SP is going even further, running its own candidate against longtime pro-communist mayor Ninagawa Torazo with the support of the Clean Government, and Democratic Socialist party. ■



# COAL WINTER



Edn Dotter

By Dan Marshall

**THE CURRENT NATIONWIDE COAL** strike, whose full economic impact is only now being felt, has become possibly the most important coalfield conflict in the 88-year history of the United Mine Workers union. The strike's outcome will affect decisively the union's internal balance of power as well as its relationship to the coal industry.

The union may suffer a historic defeat if members accede to operator-imposed penalties against wildcat strikers or if national bargaining collapses into district or local settlements. On the other hand, the union can hold its own by winning a contract that retains an industry-wide health program, fully restores health benefits, includes an equitable grievance procedure, and contains a cost-of-living clause.

At the outset of the strike the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) was clearly calling the shots. Last July the BCOA forced health benefit cuts by refusing to allocate money from one fund to another (see page 12). They appeared willing to return those benefits, at least on the surface, only if the union accepted assorted "labor stability" measures.

Utilities and steel companies had very high coal stockpiles, press reports emphasized, so the national economy could easily weather a two-month strike. Moreover, the coal industry's economic status seemed invulnerable—the value of coal has more than quadrupled since 1970 and company profits have soared accordingly.

With President Carter preaching the value of coal as the nation's foremost energy resource, the companies seemed to be entering the promised land at long last.

**AS THE COAL STRIKE ENTERS ITS** 18th week, however, it looks like the operators seriously miscalculated. Their "extremely hard line" in negotiations has in-

## UNITY AND DISUNITY IN THE UMW

furiated the union's bargaining council, prolonged the walkout and compelled the federal government to intervene. The miners and their lower-level leaders, meanwhile, are exhibiting a remarkable degree of solidarity, resourcefulness and determination.

Indeed, the strike has unified the lower and middle ranks of the UMW to an extent unknown since the victory of Miners for Democracy (MFD) in 1972. Miners' rallies and telegrams to Carter indicate that UMW members are willing to stay out for months, defying a Taft-Harley injunction if necessary, to achieve a decent contract.

The union's new-found unity is directed not only at obstinate coal companies, but also at its equally intransigent top officer, UMW president Arnold Miller. Because of his incompetent handling of the negotiations and high-pressure efforts to obtain approval of a tentative three-year contract Miller has driven a wedge between himself and the rank and file.

"Compared to the last wildcat, anti-Miller sentiment is much more thoroughgoing and deep," explains Tom Bethell, editor of *Coal Patrol*. "Most of the rank and filers are genuinely opposed to what they know about this contract and are appalled at Miller for having negotiated it. They're angry at him and want him out. There have been thousands of tele-

grams—a room-filling volume—rolling into the international headquarters calling for his resignation."

The strike also has become the paramount test of Miller's leadership and standing with the rank and file. "There is a growing awareness that Miller is in there for a five-year term, which means that he has not only done this but has another shot at it in three years. That realization builds a strong sense of solidarity against him," adds Bethell.

Miller gained prominence in the UMW reform movement through his involvement in a successful campaign in West Virginia to qualify the victims of black lung disease for workmen's compensation. Himself suffering from black lung, Miller went on to head the Black Lung Association, an important component of the Miners for Democracy. In May 1972 he was chosen to head the MFD slate against W.A. "Tony" Boyle, the UMW president who has been convicted twice for the murder of another union rival.

The 1972 election was as much a referendum against Boyle as a vote for the MFD. Miller's victory, with 56 percent of the vote, was heralded as the beginning of a new era for the UMW and as a model for rank and file insurgency throughout the labor movement.

Backed by a young, politically progres-

sive staff and an activated rank and file, Miller brought democracy to a union that had been run with an iron fist for half a century. At the first reform convention in 1973, for example, union members won the right to ratify the national contract by referendum and elect district officers.

Lacking self-confidence and organizational abilities, Miller soon proved unequal to the arduous task of providing firm yet dynamic leadership to a union exploding with the democratic fervor unleashed by the reform movement. Many union members and intermediate officers were disgruntled with his conduct of the 1974 negotiations, a situation that gave the old Boyle forces an opportunity to reorganize. Under the direction of Lee Roy Patterson, a strip miner from Kentucky, and other Boyle appointees on the International Executive Board, the union's upper ranks dissolved into warring factions.

**THESE INTERNAL TENSIONS BURST** into the open in June 1975 when Mike Trbovich, UMW vice-president who had long resented the selection of Miller as standard-bearer for the reform movement, charged his administration with financial irregularities. Trbovich also launched a red-baiting barrage against international staff members, culminating in a speech to the 1976 UMW convention where he blasted "the internal infiltration of the Socialistic, Revolutionary and Communistic elements which may soon threaten to destroy this union."

At the same time the union's composition was changing abruptly. As the coal industry boomed jobs became available and thousands of young miners, many of them Vietnam veterans and political activists, returned to the coalfields. The average age of miners dropped from the mid 50s to the early 30s. When coal companies violated sections of the contract or gummed-up the grievance procedure,

*Continued on next page.*



Continued from page 9.

this "new generation" of mineworkers was more likely to fight back. As a result wildcat strikes escalated out of control.

Surrounded by Executive Board denunciations and vocal dissatisfaction among rank and filers, Miller became increasingly paranoid and incapable of steering the union's machinery. He began seeing union enemies lurking behind every door of UMW international headquarters. When Miller suspected his secretary of plotting with secretary-treasurer Harry Patrick, for instance, he had the door to her office removed. Staff persons were kicked out for "insubordination."

The internal chaos reached debilitating proportions during the last year. In a bitter race for union president last June Miller narrowly defeated—with 40 percent of the vote—Harry Patrick, who most closely represented the MFD perspective, and Lee Roy Patterson, the leader of the resurgent Boyle forces. Only half of the union's 277,000 working and retired members voted, however, so Miller entered his second term with the backing of about one-fifth of the membership.

After 20 young staff members resigned or were fired last year Miller approached negotiations woefully unprepared. He hired an outside consulting firm to collect bargaining information and put together the union's monthly newspaper. After four months of intermittent talks both sides agree that Miller has been a disruptive if not disastrous influence on negotiations.

Even the symbols of the reform movement have disappeared. When Miller took office, for instance, he sold the union's limousines and cut top officers' salaries. Last month, with his salary back up to \$45,000, Miller leased a nine-passenger Cadillac to keep in step with the coal operators who, after all, have Lear jets.

**HIS STRONG-ARM EFFORTS TO** intimidate union critics has also soiled his image among union members. Between Washington, D.C., meetings of the bargaining council, Miller and his bodyguard, Charles Johnson, flew to Charleston, W.Va., to confront Cecil Roberts, District 17 vice-president, on some charges he leveled against Miller in an interview with *Coal Age*. With a pistol prominently displayed in his belt Miller threatened to have Roberts removed from office for the accusations. A shouting and cussing match soon turned into a fistfight between Roberts and Johnson.

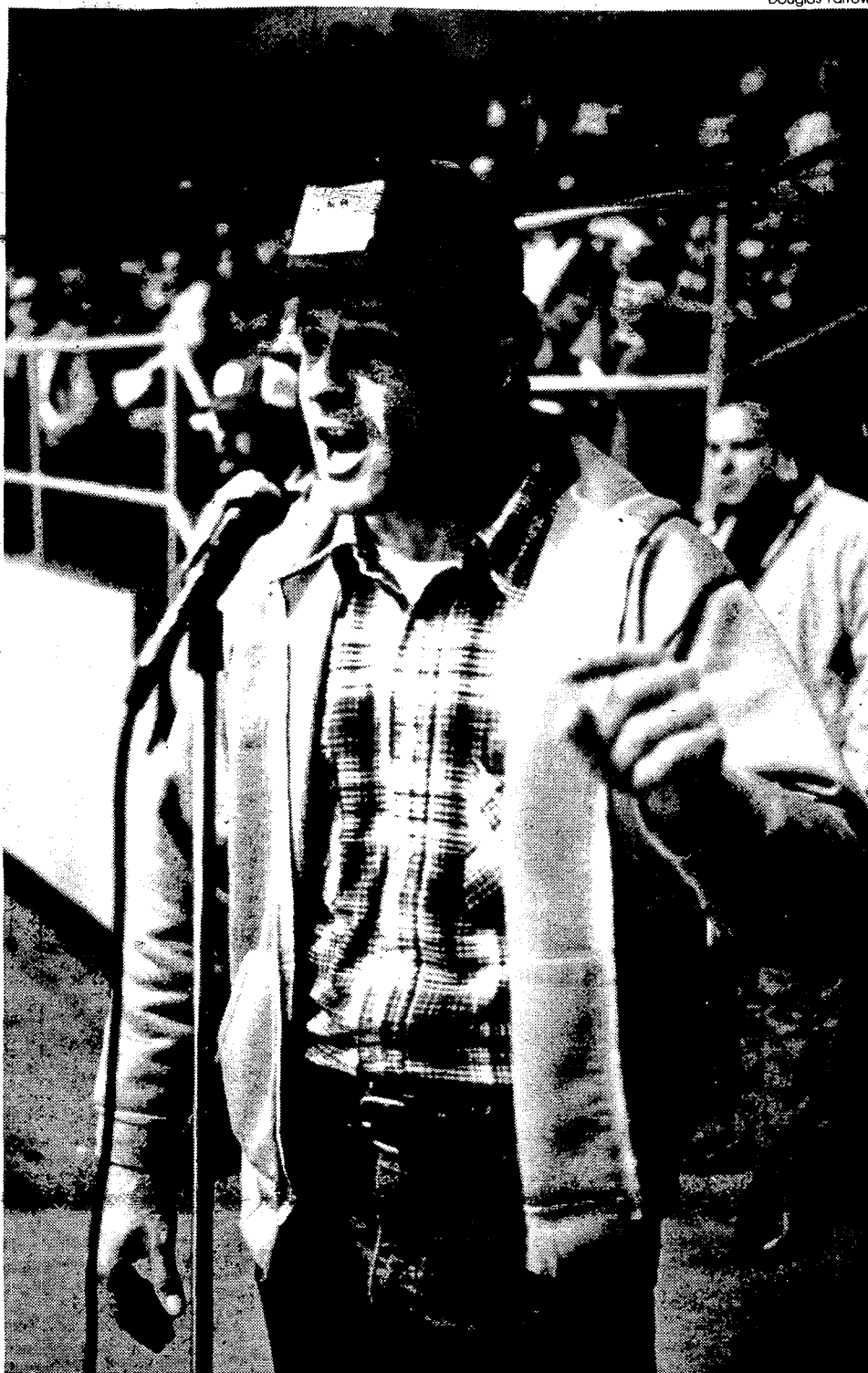
After the incident Miller was seen waving his gun and vowing, "I may live a hell of a lot longer than he [Roberts] will if he keeps up his ways."

In early February Miller pulled two veteran organizers out of the Stearns, Ky., strike, now entering its 19th month. Both supporters of Harry Patrick, the organizers had disobeyed Miller's order to cease all public events for the duration of the national strike. "It was clearly a move on Miller's part to put a silence to potential critics before the new contract comes out," remarked an observer.

But Miller has been damaged most by the details of the tentative contract, which have been widely distributed and

# UMW DISUNITY

Douglas Yarrow



Several thousand miners denounced the first contract settlement at a Beckley, W. Va., meeting on Feb. 11.

debated at local union gatherings. No expressions of rank and file support have been reported. "There is no other major collective bargaining agreement in the country with discipline provisions nearly so punitive," says a confidential Carter administration memo obtained by *Coal Patrol*.

"The contract was so much worse than anyone thought it would be. Miller had to be crazy to think that he could push it through," comments a coalfield observer.

"I wouldn't ask a dog to work under the contract he proposed. It's just pitiful," one local president told *The Mountain Eagle* of Whitesburg, Ky.

**THOUGH DISSATISFACTION WITH** the contract and with Miller is widespread,

the prospects for a "new" Miners for Democracy emerging from the strike are very unclear. Several "rank and file" organizations are gaining adherents and media attention but have yet to coalesce into a union-wide force. In addition, district and local officials have thus far held back from becoming public spokesmen for the opposition.

Miners for Recall, a group based in southern West Virginia that popped up during the summer's 10-week wildcat over health benefit cuts, is again circulating petitions to oust Miller. Recall leaders now claim to have collected almost enough signatures to start the union's complex recall process.

But observers question the viability of a recall attempt. Since it entails gather-

ing signatures from 30 percent of the union's total membership within 30 days, it would require a degree of organization not now evident among recall supporters. Their attempts to collect signatures in other districts have reportedly floundered because many miners see it as an extraneous issue in the midst of a national strike. Miller also would be able to delay the process indefinitely by challenging all the signatures gathered in the first stage.

Miners for a Fair Contract, based in southwestern Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio and northern West Virginia, apparently has the most legitimacy among the rank and file groups. Recently opening an office in Morgantown, W.Va., the group has helped to organize strike support rallies and provide relief for miners.

The most controversial and potentially destructive of these organizations, observers say, is the Miners Right To Strike Committee (MRTSC), which is heavily influenced by the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). Since a massive wildcat in August 1975—when the MRTSC advanced the position that the strike should continue until the right to strike was achieved—the MRTSC has trained its rhetorical guns more on the union's leadership than on the coal companies. They are reportedly planning to urge a no-vote on whatever contract is negotiated.

During a recent support rally in Charleston, according to an eye witness, MRTSC leader Mike Branch physically attacked Paul Nyden, an Antioch professor, for passing out copies of a pamphlet critical of both the far right and the far left inside the union.

MRTSC activities have also fueled a wave of red-baiting in coalmining areas. A group called "Miners Against Reds" has been cutting up newspaper articles quoting MRTSC/RCP activists and then passing them out with lines, arrows and comments like: do you want these people running our union?

"There's been an incredible amount of red-baiting around here," says Dennis Boyer of Morgantown. "It fills the newspapers, the letters to the editor and radio talk shows. The local media publishes half-hour tirades against socialism."

The rank and file unity displayed in the strike may prod secondary-level union leaders to align themselves with another rank and file movement that could grow in opposition to Miller. Jack Perry, District 17 director, and Ken Dawes, District 12 director, have gained prominence in recent months as sharp critics of Miller, but neither have stepped to the forefront of the opposition on the bargaining council. Cecil Roberts apparently intends to challenge Miller the next time around.

"They don't seem to be aware of the fact that they have all three networks and every major newspaper at their command right now," says Bethell. "They could go out and take positions on behalf of the reform wing of the bargaining council, but are very hesitant to be identified as spokesmen for any faction, wing or movement. The raw material for another rank and file movement is out there—probably a lot more than there was in 1972. The question is whether it's going to coalesce."

**AS IN THESE TIMES WENT TO PRESS** the nationwide coal strike was rapidly approaching a government-imposed climax. On Feb. 22 the UMW bargaining council, the group of district leaders and union negotiators who must approve any settlement before it goes to the full membership for ratification, agreed to accept any individual or industry-wide contract whose terms approximate a Feb. 20 settlement with the Pittsburgh & Midway Coal Co., a subsidiary of Gulf Oil Corp.

BCOA negotiators, whose member companies had been badly divided over the value of the P&M settlement, immediately rejected the council's offer.

The bargaining council dismissed an industry proposal that both sides voluntarily submit to binding arbitration. According to government and industry sources contacted by CBS News, the arbitration proposal was simply a "negotiating maneuver" intended to put the un-

ion on the defensive. It was assumed all along that the UMW would reject it.

While Labor Secretary Ray Marshall still hoped for a negotiated settlement, he stressed that the Carter administration would soon take drastic steps to end the strike that is precipitating mandatory electricity cut-backs in midwestern states, layoffs in steel mills, and the shutdown of some auto production facilities.

The P&M contract, waiting to be ratified by local unionists, would authorize the company to suspend or discharge the "instigators" of wildcat strikes, but not those miners who refuse to cross picket lines.

It also eliminates so-called production incentive plans, which district leaders believe would produce "extremely dangerous" conditions in mines, and a 30-day probationary period for new miners proposed by the BCOA.

The Carter administration, meanwhile, is left with two options to end the strike. Both would be difficult to implement and likely damage administration relations with the entire labor movement.

The first, a Taft-Hartley injunction that would order miners back to work for 80 days, now appears unlikely. Both Marshall and Carter have stated their reluctance to use it, since it would probably

be defied by the miners. The governors of nine hard-hit states, in a recent White House meeting, agreed that invoking Taft-Hartley would be unwise. Jay Rockefeller, governor of West Virginia, predicts that it would lead to further "chaos" and UMW president Arnold Miller says the result would be "bloodshed."

The most likely step, therefore, is federal seizure of the mines, also a politically controversial step. Both Miller and AFL-CIO president George Meany say that seizure is preferable. The details would be worked out in congressional legislation.

Coal industry officials, however, are worried about the implications of seizure and are certain to protest with lawsuits. "Nationalization of the mines would set a dangerous precedent," cautions a coal company vice-president. "We'd be heading down the road to socialism."

—Dan Marshall

# THE TALKS



By Edgar James

*I've stood for the union, walked in the line  
Fought against the company.  
I've stood for the UMW of A,  
Now who's gonna stand for me?*  
—Coal Tattoo by Billy Edd Wheeler

LATE IN THE MORNING OF DECEMBER 22, 1972, hundreds of coal miners celebrating Arnold Miller's victory over Tony Boyle surged through the union's baronial headquarters in a scene that combined the best of Andrew Jackson's inaugural and the storming of the Bastille. Now, just six years later, miners are once again strangers in their own house. To understand their current troubles one must understand the nature of the Lewis legacy and of the insurgent's victory.

From 1920 until 1960 John L. Lewis was the mineworkers' union. And it was not just a matter of tenure: Lewis was an often brilliant and always powerful leader.

In few industries have the class lines been more clearly drawn than in coal. Appalachian passivity to the contrary, in the '20s and '30s miners fought and died for the union. Matewan, Evarts, Cabin Creek, Paint Creek; there were no neutrals there.

The UMW began as a confederation of largely autonomous regional miners' unions. Lewis hammered them into a highly centralized autocracy by placing district after district into trusteeship. Henceforth, all union officers were elected in convention, after being nominated by a committee of Lewis appointees. No nominee ever lost.

At the bottom of Lewis' restructuring was his fear of potential rivals. Lewis counted few labor leaders among his coterie and associated with an unlikely assortment of Washington plutocrats. His break with Philip Murray in 1940 reveals a ruthless opportunism devoid of personal loyalties. Significantly, most of the union's best organizers and strategists left with Murray. By the time Lewis retired the union was devoid of leadership and with as many democratic features as a pressure cooker.

**LEWIS' IDIOSYNCRATIC ECONOMIC** views have had an equally lasting impact. While he might declaim that "labor and capital may be partners in theory, but ...are enemies in fact," he was a corporatist variant. Lewis would use the union to rationalize the industry by promoting greater productivity in smaller and more concentrated units.

Lewis made his boldest moves in the immediate post-war period when King Coal was in royal pain—the domestic heating market had dropped out and diesel was replacing coal. Lewis said that by shutting down 140,000 coal mines and forcing 200,000 miners into other industries, the coal problem will settle itself." Simple analysis suggests that Lewis traded job security for mechanization. But it was more than that.

Lewis took the contradictions between trade unions in a capitalist economy to new heights by loaning operators money to mechanize. And what he couldn't organize or muscle out, he bought out. Together with Cleveland industrialist Cyrus Eaton he devoured everything from a steamship company to coal companies and utility stock in his effort to reorder the industry.

The price of Lewis' policies was high in coal country. A veritable Coxy's army of unemployed Appalachians hit the northern industrial centers. In Harry Campbell's words, right as no to the Cumberlandians.

The legacy of Lewis' leadership would not have been such an issue had he not bequeathed the latter-day Caligula. Tony Boyle, Lewis' successor, was an inept, heavy-headed, authoritarian who was unfortunately enough to have inherited the union just as the industry began to climb out of its post-war depression.

Failing to understand the change, Boyle was Brown's collaborator. He was the model labor classmen when he appeared before the Senate Labor subcommittee considering mine safety legislation in 1969. "We will not abridge the rights of the operators in running the mines. We

# UMW STILL SUBJECT TO LEWIS LEGACY



John L. Lewis after a visit to the mines.

follow the judgment of the coal operators right or wrong."

They were frequently wrong. Under Boyle's tenure alone, over 2,000 miners died on the job. In 1968 Boyle stood before the still smoking portal of Consolidation Coal Company's #9 mine where 78 men were trapped and told the soon-to-be widows: "Consol is one of the best companies as far as safety is concerned." The record was otherwise.

Slowly, steadily, the identity between the institution and its leaders that Lewis forged began to erode.

Barely four months after the Consolidation disaster, 40,000 West Virginia miners walked off their jobs to force passage of a law to make black lung an occupationally compensable disease. Boyle condemned the move.

Under Lewis, cooptation became a refined art; under Boyle, blacklisting was a blunt instrument. Beginning in 1964, when a dissident was so badly beaten on the floor of the convention that it had to be recessed, Boyle systematically purged the union of dissenters. In 1972 there were so many victims of Boyle's reprisals at

Miller's inaugural that it looked like the second coming.

Boyle has been convicted twice of instigating the murder of Joseph Yablonski and his family. Had he not overreacted to Yablonski's candidacy and ordered the murders, Boyle—like Frank Fitzsimmons of the Teamsters—might still be another gargoyle in labor's house.

**WHEN THE POST-YABLONSKI RE-**form organization, Miners for Democracy, chose candidates to go against Boyle in the 1972 court-ordered rerun election, they chose Arnold Miller, Mike Trbovich, and Harry Patrick.

The choice of Miller made geo-political sense: he was from the union's largest district, where the Miners for Democracy was weak; and he was Anglo-Saxon (MFD's northern ethnics believed one of their kind couldn't win in "hillbilly" country). Miller was also a retired miner, and Yablonski had only received some 7 percent of their vote. But as Miller emerged as the leader the evening before the convention he made a pact with Trbovich, MFD's chairman, that only the latter would accept the convention's endorsement, while Miller would become vice-president. Without notice Miller broke the agreement. Trbovich, himself erratic and irascible, would never forget.

Miller beat Boyle by a relatively thin 10 percentage points. There was no tradition of opposition within the union, and many Boyle supporters were simply institutional loyalists. Miller mistook a referendum on Boyle for his mandate. Instead of consolidating his hold, he alienated even the most loyal.

Conventional wisdom suggests that the disbanding of the MFD led to Miller's demise. But the MFD was largely mythical and its continuing symbolic existence thwarted coalition-building among the miners.

Miller himself never followed a consistent strategy. Instead he operated *ad hoc* under the maxim that if you're not for me, you're against me. In the early district elections that determined the composition of his executive board Miller capriciously endorsed good old boy candidates over the younger local leaders who made up his campaign organization.

In one eastern Kentucky district, he campaigned for a virtual unknown whom he had met at a retired miners' rally against the MFD campaign leader and a Boyle loyalist. Miller's candidate fared poorly, but the MFD leader lost by only seven votes—out of thousands—to the old guard candidate. When the latter resigned and a rerun was declared, Miller again backed his friend. This time, he barely placed; the MFD candidate lost by a wider margin; another Boyle supporter won.

The pattern repeated itself again and again. Morale sunk and eventually the balance of power on the board shifted as more Boyle supporters were elected and some MFD leaders went into opposition.

Miller was recently re-elected as a minority president and ironically succeeded in capturing the executive board. But once again, in the current negotiations, he established a self-fulfilling and institutionally destructive polarity by denouncing opposition to his contract as politically motivated.

It is difficult to overstate the political importance of the Mineworkers union. It exists as the only counter-position to the coal industry in a region synonymous with the other America. It also commands great loyalty. Most miners define themselves in terms of the union; they aren't miners—they're mineworkers. But the union in 1978 is fundamentally different from the union under Lewis or Boyle. Political culture has radically changed, and the union's structure now requires rank-and-file participation at critical junctures. Deciding whether to accept or reject a contract is one such juncture.

And miners aren't about to be sold out in silence.

Edgar James was an organizer for Miners for Democracy from 1970 to 1973, and served in Arnold Miller's administration until 1975. He is a contributing editor to *Working Papers*, where portions of this article have appeared.

## Dear Friend,

On December 6, 1977, the contract between the United Mine Workers of America and the Bituminous Coal Operators Association expired, and 160,000 mine workers went out on strike. At the same time, 810,000 miners, widows, pensioners and their families lost their medical benefits. As the strike enters its third month, many people are not getting the health care they need.

The Miners' Support Committee of Southern West Virginia recently organized a free clinic where active and retired miners and their families can get primary health care at no charge. The Miners Free Clinic is located in Beckley, W.Va., in the heart of the coalfields. Many individuals and organizations are donating services and supplies. The staff is entirely volunteer, composed of approximately 45 health workers, including 14 doctors. We use space loaned by a local clinic.

But we still need money—especially for medicine. We hope that you will support our work and make a donation to the Miners Free Clinic. We believe that the clinic is providing an important service. Any contribution you can make will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Miners' Support Committee

Enclosed is my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please make checks payable to the MINERS' SUPPORT COMMITTEE.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Miners' Support Committee  
P.O. Box 3182  
East Beckley Station  
Beckley, W.Va. 25801



# THE RISE AND FALL OF THE

By Curtis Seltzer

**IN THE LOBBY OF THE UNITED** Mine Workers' headquarters in Washington, D.C., an outsized bust of John L. Lewis watches the fumbblings of his successors. Not only does Lewis watch, he judges. His is a constant, scowling glare, fashioned deliberately to inspire fear and awe. Lewis' shadow darkens the union of coal miners in life and death.

Like a polygon, Lewis had many sides. It follows that the institutions he shaped to express his view of the world would be as complicated. So it is with the United Mine Workers of America (UMW)—a coal miners' union—and its Welfare and Retirement Funds.

The fund was designed in 1946 to provide health care and pensions to coal miners and their families. After four years of erratic beginnings the fund really got going in 1950.

In the decade that followed the fund built and sponsored a unique health system, one of the most progressive in the nation—a network of hospitals and community clinics that offered prepaid, nearly comprehensive health care in the coalfields.

From its inception the fund has been beset with contradictions.

It has always been a creature of collective bargaining between the union and the coal operators. By informal agreement UMW presidents controlled its assets and set basic institutional directions until 1973. At the same time the fund's medical program was conceived and implemented by some of America's most radical medical people.

The resulting oil-and-water mixture of progressive medical personnel and conservative—and often corrupt—UMW presidents has fermented in the fund for some 25 years. While the service-oriented left-wingers strove to build a model health-care system, UMW presidents Lewis and Boyle turned the fund into a carnival of financial jugglers, pickpockets and side-show sharpies.

The nub of an even more important set of contradictions lies in the financing of the fund. The level of mine workers' health-and-pension benefits have always been pegged to the level of output of unionized operators. By linking benefits to production and productivity, the fund tied itself closely to the fortunes of the industry.

The plan was barely in place in the early 1960s it began a series of contractions that have reduced it from a vision of a comprehensive health system to little more than a health insurance scheme. The hospitals have been sold, prepayment axed, clinic support cut, eligibility and benefit levels dramatically reduced.

Last June these cutbacks precipitated a summer-long wildcat strike of 80,000 miners and are now a major issue in the nationwide UMW strike.

Today the fund stands at the crossroads of historical changes both in the industry and in the union. The UMW/big coal operator alliance that structure the political economy of the industry since 1950 has collapsed. The traditional Eastern leadership of the industry by Consolidation Coal and U.S. Steel is now challenged by big non-unionized, strip mines in the West, led by Amax. And the UMW is fragmented.

The future of coalfield health care and pensions is directly tied to the strength of the UMW in collective bargaining—a strength that is being severely tested now.

**PRIOR TO 1945 OCCUPATIONAL** safety and health, not to mention health care benefits, took a back seat to what John L. Lewis considered more urgent demands: union recognition, the union shop, the eight-hour day and higher wages.

World War II imposed a wage-freeze on American workers. Health care benefits were wedged into collective bargain-

ing, however, when the National Labor Board ruled that a sickness benefit program not exceeding 5 percent of payroll costs was acceptably non-inflationary.

Companies faced with excess profits could deduct the costs of health benefits as business expenses with "...little actual expense, since they would have had in any case to have paid much of it out in taxes." The Department of Labor estimated about 600,000 U.S. workers "were covered by health benefit plans established through collective bargaining" by 1945.

In the spring of 1945 Lewis demanded and industrial health plan from the operators. (Pensions were not part of the original proposal.) The plan would be financed by a 10 cents-per-ton royalty on UMW-mined coal.

The operators refused. Labor Secretary Frances Perkins, in unsuccessful mediation attempts, rejected the health plan demand. Miners walked out when their contract expired in 1945. President Truman subsequently seized the mines and the miners returned to work under a conditional contract with the U.S. government soon after.

Lewis renewed the demand for health benefits and linked it with a pension plan in his 1946 negotiations with Secretary of the Interior Julius Krug, manager of the now-federalized coal industry.

Eventually, Lewis persuaded Krug to go along with a five cent royalty (five cents to the fund for every ton of coal mined), and the fund was born in 1946.

Financing the fund on the basis of output vested the UMW with an interest in higher production and productivity, but not necessarily in a large number of working miners. In other words, the scope and quality of UMW health care was to depend on the marketplace success of the coal operators, not on employment in the coalfields. (In contrast, almost all other union health plans are financed by employer and/or employee contributions per worker, thus linking the size of the benefit fund to the size of the labor force.)

It soon became apparent that when health and safety concerns in the workplace rubbed against productivity goals, production won. In an ironic way, then, the fund "won" as the rank-and-file was losing. But what Lewis conceded in occupational health and safety, he hoped to make good through quality health care provided by the fund.

**BY 1956 THE FUND HAD COMPLETED** a chain of 10 coalfield hospitals and helped to organize several dozen clinics that employed doctors—both general practitioners and specialists—in group practices. Services included inpatient and outpatient hospital care, in-hospital physicians' care, rehabilitation, nursing home services, pharmaceuticals, short-term therapy in "good prognosis" mental cases and major appliances.

The clinics provided comprehensive primary health care to their participants on a prepaid basis. They stressed continuous health supervision, health maintenance, disease prevention, early detection, outpatient specialist consultation, family-centered rehabilitation and social services.

In some cases the clinics were organized and built by the UMW; in others, locally-organized group practices were financed by the UMW. Where neither arrangement could be made, flat-rate retainers were worked out with the most competent local providers to treat miners and their families. In addition, thousands of widows received modest death and maintenance benefits; modest pensions were distributed to eligible retirees.

In the late 1940s the fund hired politically active medical administrators and doctors for key jobs. Many came to the fund as refugees from Truman's red-hunting in the Public Health Service and later from McCarthy's binge.

Lewis was willing to hire medical radicals in the teeth of McCarthyism because

of their professional ability and willingness to work for a militant labor union. They in turn got jobs and a chance to do good work.

Each side made its peace with the other. The radicals didn't challenge Lewis' alliance with the big companies, the fixed tonnage royalty or the eligibility cutbacks. In fact, advocacy of better health care led the fund's idealists to welcome the cold cash Lewis coaxed from coal operators. Lewis in turn backed up the radicals when they were attacked by the AMA for practicing "socialized" medicine.

And attacked they were. The fund's challenge to traditional fee-for-service care and its advocacy of group practice with consumer control enraged state and national medical societies who sabotaged and red-baited the fund throughout the '50s.

Short of national health insurance (which labor had pressed on Congress since the 1940s), the fund's health care system was as good as there was in the U.S. in the '50s.

**YET, AS GOOD AS THE FUND WAS,** it had its limits. The 1950 contract reconstituted the fund under the absolute control of three appointed trustees: one chosen by the UMW, a second by the operators and a third by the first two.

Although Lewis retired as UMW president in 1960, he served as the union's fund trustee until 1969—and ran the show. His choice for the neutral trustee was Josephine Roche, a confidant, who served until the early 1970s. She was never known to vote against Lewis.

Rank-and-file or beneficiary participation in top-level fund decision-making was totally absent. Policy was made by professionals within the framework established by Lewis.

Fund doctors and medical administrators at lower levels did try to devise ways of making medical programs accountable to miners and consumers, and many of the clinics were consumer-controlled.

To keep the big companies competitive with oil and gas in the electric utility market, Lewis and his successors chose not to seek an increase in the royalty (set at 40 cents per ton in 1952) through collective bargaining for 20 years. Consequently the fund had to cut off unemployed miners from health care.

In the early 1960s the static royalty forced the fund to sell its hospitals at a financial and spiritual loss. Without the hospitals, the fund, like any prepaid health system, no longer had a yardstick with which to measure the quality of other coalfield services.

The fund's medical staff also had to fudge their commitment to preventive medicine when it involved occupational injury and disease.

Britain had recognized black lung as an occupational disease of coal miners in 1942, yet the fund did little to pin the growing incidence of the disease on the new machines that were the core of the post-1950 mechanization. The fund supported the occupational health work of Dr. Lorin Kerr, but little was done to follow it up.

Neither the UMW nor the fund pushed for black lung disability compensation until the late 1960s, and no thought at all was given to industry-financed compensation. It took the rank-and-file black lung revolt in West Virginia in 1969 to flush out the UMW on black lung compensation and even then the union's role was tainted by its Johnny-come-lately character.

**WHEN UMW REFORMERS, LED BY** Arnold Miller, took over in December, 1972, both the UMW and the fund badly needed an overhaul. That work was begun, but it faced many problems and the odds against its success were surmountable, but barely.

Harry Huge was named the UMW trustee and chairman of the fund. Inde-



At its height the UMW health and benefit plan this country. Above, a miner's family is examine win better treatment.



# ATION'S BEST HEALTH PLAN



Douglas Yarrow



he closest thing to national health insurance in a clinic. Below, black lung victims organized to

pendence of the fund from the UMW was declared. (By law its policies and administration must be distinct from the union and the operators—a requirement openly disdained by Lewis and Boyle ever since the operators had conceded control of the fund in 1950.)

Huge, a smart and ambitious man, was genuinely moved by the plight of the fund's beneficiaries. But he chose a legalistic and technical approach to solving fund problems. He hired a veteran from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, Martin Danziger, to direct the fund.

Danziger had little knowledge of coal, coal miners, coal operators, the fund, pensions or health care. His only qualification for the position was his "considerable administrative experience," as the fund's *Annual Report* phrased it.

Both Huge and Danziger now put their professional reputations on the line. They chose to equate the quality of care with efficiency of service and concentrated on improving the fund's administrative services. The result was that their constituency became health providers, not health consumers.

Huge and Danziger have not managed the funds skillfully. Suzanne Jaworski Rhodenbaugh, a former health service specialist with the Johnstown, Pa., regional funds' administrator, for instance, charged the recent cutbacks were due less to the effect of wildcats than to simple mismanagement.

"They have failed miserably at managing. Many cost and quality controls in the health program have been lost. Medical bills are paid late (if not lost); duplicate claims are paid; pension checks to retired miners are delayed; eligibility controls are often out of control. Virtually all experienced top-level funds staffers have been retired, fired, or have quit in disgust. In their place have come dozens of would-be technocrats who know nothing of labor, health or pension programs, or management. These technocrats don't stay long, however, and the incredible turnover fuels the problem.

"So much of the funds' program has been gutted while it was 'modernized'. And direct health expenditures and administrative costs have risen dramatically. Yet the self-serving press releases of the funds—putting all the blame for the financial problems on the wildcats—have been blandly accepted."

Mismanagement has aggravated the funds' money problem. The funds no longer have any effective way of checking fees billed by the doctors. The result has been predictable: massive overcharging, which, if caught at all, comes after payment.

In many regions the funds have paid charges rather than haggle with local providers over cost-based arrangements—a reflection of the funds' bias toward their provider constituency. Some hospital administrators acknowledge the funds pay more for daily services than other plans, which amounts to a funds' subsidy for other coalfield health services.

**THE UMW REFORMERS NEGOTIATED** their first contract in late 1974. To ease the financial crisis of the old fund, the UMW and the operators agreed to split it into four separate funds, each financed separately and each providing different benefits: the 1950 Pension Trust (with 82,000 pensioners), the 1950 Benefit Trust, the 1974 Pension Trust (with 5,000 pensioners) and the 1974 Benefit Trust. Both the 1950 Pension and the 1950 Benefit (health care) Funds continue to be financed by a tonnage royalty. The 1974 Pension and the 1974 Benefits Funds, however, are financed in whole or in part on an hours-worked basis.

In breaking up the funds the new contract established a two-tier pension system that discriminates against those miners who retired before 1975. Pre-contract pensioners are limited to \$250 per month

the wave after wave of wildcat strikes that have washed over the coalfields in the last three years. Since 1974 miners have quit work over a spectrum of workplace and non-workplace issues—gasoline rationing, the right to strike, offensive school textbooks, black lung legislation, seniority, safety, job rights, union politics and benefits cutbacks.

Because the other faulty projections left the funds short of cash, wildcat strikes threatened to bankrupt the 1974 and 1950 Benefit Trusts. Huge twice sought and obtained reallocation of future reserves from the other trusts to maintain health benefits before this summer's crunch.

But the operators—looking at the UMW's disintegration and upcoming contract negotiations—refused to bail out the funds a third time.

From their point of view, why should they? Industry's strategy is to use the health care system to discipline rank and file miners for striking. It is a strategy designed to soften the on-the-job militancy of miners by attacking their off-the-job security.

It is also a strategy based on the conclusion that the UMW is institutionally too fragmented to discipline its own membership; consequently operators are forced to junk their 25-year "use-the-union" posture.

**LAST MAY THE TRUSTEES DECIDED** that medical benefits would have to be cut. The funds lacked the cash to continue providing "first-dollar coverage" (payment of all initial medical costs for covered services), so a cost-sharing scheme was promulgated that set up deductible and coinsurance payments with a \$500 annual "cap" (maximum out-of-pocket payment) per eligible family.

The trustees withheld the announcement, however, until June 20—six days after Arnold Miller had squeaked through a rough reelection campaign.

The funds also decided to cut back financial support for about two dozen coalfield clinics. These "miners' clinics" are not formally affiliated with the UMW or the funds. Often set up through the combined efforts of the UMW, local unions and the funds, however, they have always enjoyed special retainer (prepayment) arrangements with the funds.

These retainers allowed the clinics to plan their programs and underwrite a wide range of medical services to miners and their communities not covered by specific fee-for-service payments. On July 1, 1977, without prior announcement, the funds stopped the retainers; instead they instituted a fee-for-service formula where the funds paid 60 percent of the bill and the patient 40 percent.

These cutbacks may be a lethal blow to one of the most innovative and, some would argue, successful elements of the funds health programs. The clinics not only provided competition to local providers, they embraced a different model of how health care should be provided.

Many of the clinics were founded on—and retain—consumer control mechanisms. Much of their programmatic thrust is toward prevention. A wide range of social services—including benefits counseling—is provided.

The clinics claim they save the funds millions of dollars by reducing hospitalizations and surgery although the claim is hard to prove. Each clinic has evolved differently over the years, and all have (a phased-in raise of \$100 over their present pensions) while new retirees are allowed pensions of more than \$350 a month on a sliding scale based on years worked and age at retirement. The artificial distinctions have embittered older pensioners and become a continuing source of division within the union.

Taken together, the funds are solvent, but separately the 1950 Pension and Benefit Trust are bankrupt. The industry, through negotiations or the funds' trustees, may try to dump the 1950 Pension Trust with its high obligations onto the federal government.

UMW negotiators estimated the cash needs of the four trusts, projecting new funds' beneficiaries, increased coal production, medical costs and inflation. Some of the projections were close; some were not. More beneficiaries were added than expected; less coal was mined and many fewer new mines were opened than the operators had promised; medical costs—for whatever reasons—went through the roof. The UMW had assumed it could organize Western strip mines; it couldn't. Bad winter weather in 1976 and 1977 cut into production.

Finally, no one could have predicted differences. Nevertheless, all have become medical outposts in the coalfields and important community institutions. Nothing will replace them if they fold.

Had miners been involved, they would have known that the June cutbacks would precipitate a strike. The funds' leadership, on the other hand, seemed surprised by the three-month wildcat that resulted.

The strike finally wound down after a coalfield meeting between strikers and Arnold Miller; the UMW president was given a 60-day reprieve to restore the cuts or call a nationwide strike.

The 80,000-member wildcat strike was a health-consumer protest. It failed to restore the cutbacks, however, because the operators were not hurt by it. It was the only wildcat in recent memory that did not find company lawyers bursting into federal court for back-to-work injunctions. When stockpiles are high, strikes don't hurt.

A necessary part of the solution to the impasse over coalfield medical care lies in negotiating a health and retirement plan that is not tied in to any particular index of operator prosperity, but finances benefits as they are needed.

For instance, the UMW could seek a contractual guarantee from the Bituminous Coal Operators of America (BCOA) to pay all funds expenses for contracted services whatever they may be. Winning this point in negotiations would free the miners' health care system from being hostage to inflation, production ups and downs and strikes, those initiated by miners and those precipitated by operators. This method could or could not continue the pay-as-you-go financing system, but it does remove the incentive for the funds to cut back on services and benefits in emergencies.

Only the UMW and the BCOA—the negotiating arm of the industry—can make such a change, and they are unlikely to do so. More likely is a switch to traditional Blue Cross/Blue Shield coverage, whereupon 25 years of coalfield health struggle goes down the drain.

The funds, as always, will be the creature of collective bargaining. This year's negotiations promise to be the most important since the 1950 contract.

Miners and mine-area health consumers are once again faced with the need to take control over their union and their health plan. They must do this both to get to the root of production-related illnesses, injuries and deaths in the mines and to establish once again an effective system of community-based health services in the coalfield regions.

Restorations of the cuts made by the trustees this summer is a necessary—but incomplete—demand. What really needs restoring is the progressive vision of the early fund, a vision of what a health care system should do. That vision is valid today. It sees a miner-controlled health service system where facilities are owned by the miners and providers are employees of a workers' organization. It's that vision that should be restored.

*A longer version of this article appeared in the Nov./Dec. Health/PAC Bulletin (11 Murray St., NYC 10017, \$8/year). Rob Burlage of the Public Resource Center assisted in its preparation. Curtis Seitzer, a veteran coalfield journalist and founder of the Appalachian News Service, now works in Washington, D.C.*



By Matt Witt

LOGAN COUNTY, W. VA.

**THE ROOF IS ONLY 30 INCHES** high. The walls are wet and jagged. The sun never shines.

This is the world of the 15,000 workers in the U.S. who mine "low" coal. They are on their knees, neck and back bent, for eight hours, five or six days a week year after year—shoveling coal, moving thick timbers for roof support, carrying 50-pound sacks of supplies.

With this winter's coal strike bringing the economics of coal into the public eye, the human side behind the wage demands often remains obscure.

For the nation's 15,000 low-coal miners—scattered throughout the southern Appalachian mountains, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Illinois, Utah, Colorado and other major coal states—each workday is a test: a test of how much physical and psychological stress they can endure.

The miners begin their day by riding flat on their stomachs as many as five miles into the earth. The ride is a jarring, jerking kidney-bouncer.

"I don't eat breakfast anymore," says James Bragg Jr., a 32-year-old miner who works in 30-inch coal in Logan County, W. Va. "Riding in that way, laying on your belly, anything you ate, you know it."

The coal seam—and therefore the work space—may narrow to as low as 24 inches and rarely fluctuates above 36 inches. The workers need knee-pads to keep their skin from rubbing raw as they crawl and often use safety shoes with steel plates on the outside to keep the toes from wearing out. Sometimes needing both hands as they crawl to their machines, they may use their mouths to carry their lunch buckets.

They pray the roof won't fall, because they can't run or even walk out of danger. In fact, they have a special dread of any kind of accident, because they know how hard it will be for their buddies, on their knees, to carry them to transportation.

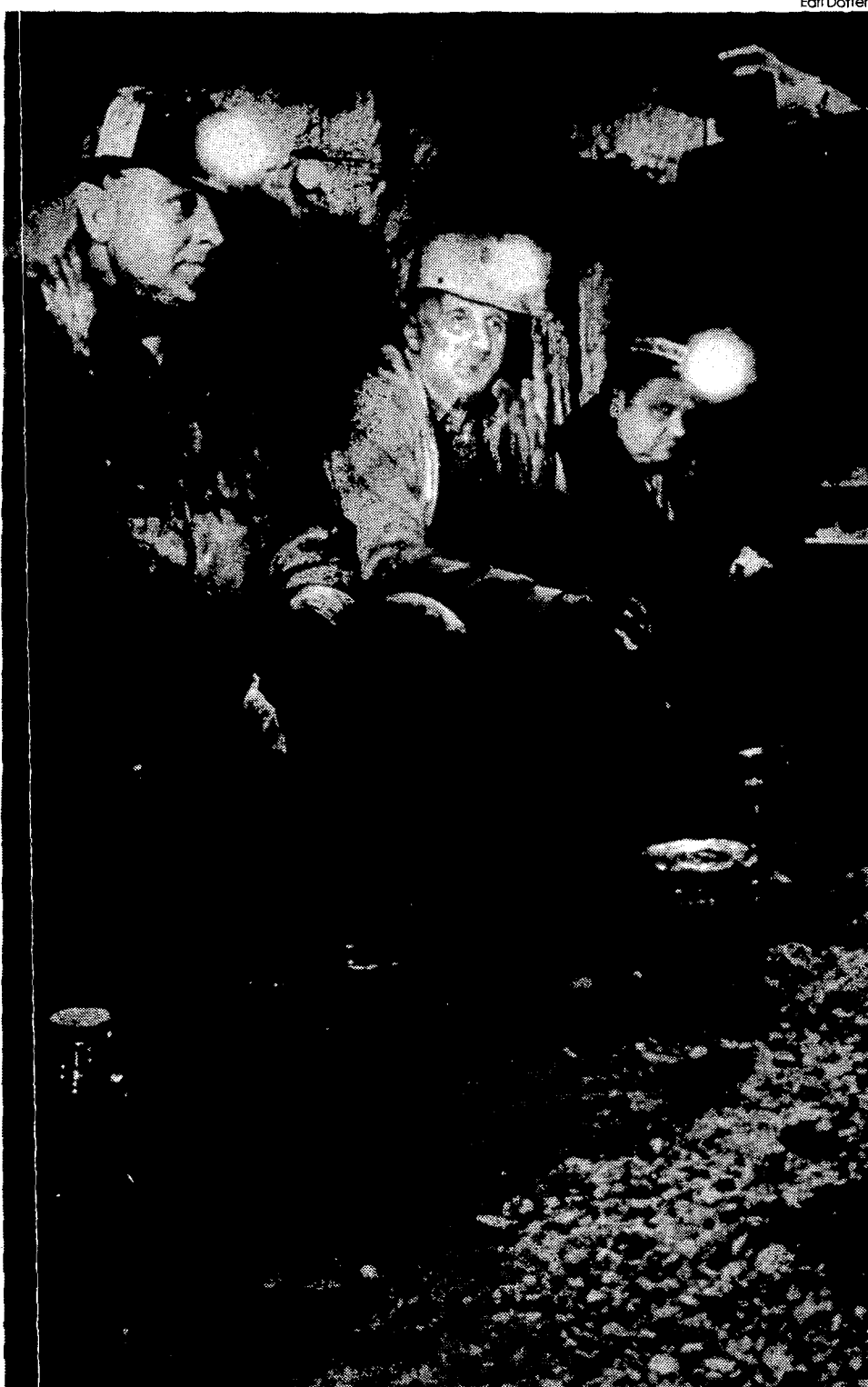
**THE WORK IS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS** than mining in higher coal, which itself is three times more hazardous than the national average for industrial operations. With almost no clearance above the 20- to 30-foot-long machines, the workers cannot see where they are going much of the time.

They have to lean out the side, while being careful not to crush themselves against the mine walls. It's like trying to drive a Greyhound bus with no windows through a narrow highway tunnel in heavy traffic with your body hanging out the side of the bus—only harder.

"The thing that scares me to death about low coal is running into somebody else on the side of the machine where I can't see them," says Blaine Lester, a 6-foot, 250-pound miner nicknamed "Big'n" who barely fits into the 2½-foot spaces. "When I come around the corner with that cutting machine, I just have to guess where I'm going and hope nobody is in the way."

According to Lester, a major safety

# DANGER IS A WAY OF LIFE IN LOW COAL



The work in low coal mining is even more dangerous than mining in higher coal, which is already three times more hazardous than other industrial operations. Here miners relax in a "dining hole" before returning to the shafts, which can go as low as 24 inches, and are rarely higher than 36 inches.

problem is that the low conditions encourage shortcuts in work procedures.

"In any mine you work in, there will be foremen trying to get you to work faster whether it's safe or not," he says.

"But it's more common in low coal, because it takes longer to do it right if you're going to put up roof supports or shovel loose coal so there won't be an explosion." Federal mine safety officials estimate

that one-third of the deaths from roof cave-ins, the number one coal-mine killer, could be prevented by the use of steel canopies or cabs to protect machine operators from falling rock.

Mining equipment manufacturers generally have failed to design canopies or cabs for 30-inch coal, according to mine safety experts. One typical cab delivered for use at a West Virginia mine confined the machine operator to a space 23 inches high, 25 inches wide, and 45 inches long, with a door less than 15 inches high.

"In 30-inch coal, you find all the health and safety problems of the coal industry," says Richard Cooper, a safety inspector for the United Mine Workers. "The people who design the equipment often have never worked in a coal mine. There is no attempt at special training for low-coal miners. And some of the government inspectors give the companies too much leeway just because certain safety regulations cost money to comply with."

**DESPITE THE DANGERS**, thousands of miners continue to work in 30-inch coal because there are few other jobs available in the isolated regions in which they live. Young men and women often find employment more easily at mines with low coal than at other operations where they would compete for jobs with older, more experienced workers.

"I don't like it at all, to be honest with you," says Bill Curry, a young miner who left a good job in Chicago so he could raise his family in his native West Virginia. "I think it's a hazard to my health, especially eating all that [coal] dust. All the older men around here are dying from black lung [disease] after so many years of eating the dust. But how else can I make enough money to live on?"

During his first weeks on the job, Curry brought a washcloth to work so he could wash his face and hands before eating lunch. But the other men laughed at him, and soon he could see their point: after crawling through the dust, water, grease and loose coal all morning, how could he pretend, while lying on his side on the mine floor to eat, that the grime could be overcome by a little washing?

While young miners like Curry say they are forced to stay in low coal, some more experienced workers actually prefer it.

One big reason is that the companies often must pay \$5 or \$10 above the \$50-\$60 per day other miners earn. With the cost of living soaring because of general inflation, the coalfield housing shortage and the high cost of transportation in rural areas, many miners with families cannot turn down a chance to increase their pay.

"The company has to pay us a little more; they have to treat us right," says Cecil Bobbit, an older mine worker whose specialty is handling explosives. "We've got experienced men that could work anywhere they want to. So they've got to get along with us."

Matt Witt, former editor of the *United Mine Workers Journal*, now writes on job safety issues from Washington, D.C.

(© 1978 Pacific News Service)

IN THESE TIMES correspondent Kelley Martin recently visited Charleston, W. Va., to talk to striking coal miners. One of the miners that she interviewed, who did not want to have his name used for fear of the pervasive "redbaiting" that has occurred in the area, summed up the strike in the following way:

"This strike's no longer about economic issues; it's about political issues—the right to strike, whether or not the coal operators can take away our health and welfare benefits, safe working conditions and things like that.

"All of us on strike are losing money. I was out two months this summer and now it's almost three months this time. But we are not doing it just for a better paycheck. We're doing it to build the union, and that's why we wouldn't settle when the BCOA offered a wage increase that took away the right to strike.

"Heck, there are guys out on the picket line now whose grandfathers lived in tents for two years. They never made up

the money they lost during that strike even with what they earned during the rest of their working lives. But they got a union and they felt like human beings because they had better working conditions.

"The Steelworkers gave up the right to strike but I think they made a mistake. They may gain in the short run but they'll lose in the long run. We've got to have the right to strike. The grievance procedure sounds beautiful in writing—submitting everything that can't be resolved to arbitration—but it doesn't work in practice. The companies want things to go to arbitration because they know they're going to win. Seventy-five percent of the cases that go to arbitration are decided in the company's favor.

"And they're using the grievance procedure as a way to discipline guys they don't like even though they know they'll lose when it's arbitrated. Things like violating the contract on seniority or job bidding or temporary job assignments—even though you file for arbitration you've got to do it anyway until the decision comes through.

"Now I think the strike is a powerful weapon and you shouldn't have to resort to it over every little thing. If I want to shoot an alley cat, I don't get out my 34 Winchester, I use my pellet gun. But wildcat strikes are all we've got when the grievance procedure doesn't work, and you gain a certain amount of self respect from being able to side with your brothers and

your sisters.

"If you read the proposed contract you'll see that the language about what you can be fined for in connection with wildcat strikes is real vague. Like just passing out literature that *might* lead to a work stoppage—whether it actually occurs or not—is subject to a fine.

"And health benefits—if we accepted what they offered, we'd be going backwards. Before the funds ran out we didn't pay anything. Now they want us to pay \$7.50 every time we see a doctor and \$5 on every prescription.

"The most important thing at this point is to broaden the strike. People have been sitting on the sidelines. It's past the time for free clinics and relief fund money. We're fighting for all of labor. The UMW was the union out of which the CIO and then the Rubber Workers and the UAW and the Steelworkers grew. The coal operators are out to break the union and if they can break the UMW, they can break any union in this country."

## ON THE SCENE



By David Moberg

**NEARLY DOUBLING PRODUCTION** of coal by 1985 is a major plank in Carter's energy platform, just as it had been for Gerald Ford before him. Since the U.S. has reserves of coal that could last 400 to 600 years at the current rate of use, corporate and government energy planners are especially attracted to coal as a partial substitute for the rising oil imports that are contributing to a worsening balance of payments.

Yet there are very good reasons to question the wisdom of the coal strategy. Reaching the goal would bring increased damage to the air and environment, endanger the health and safety of miners and other people, and further disrupt the social life of mining regions.

Increased dependence on coal will also shift the country more towards centralized electric power. Coal also competes with various forms of solar power, including conversion of "biomass" (plants, crops, trees, sewage, manure) into alcohol and methane gas.

Carter's energy plan calls for increasing coal production from the 672 million tons in 1977 to one billion tons a year by 1985. Coal, which constitutes 90 percent of the fossil fuel reserves in the U.S., now contributes 18 percent of the national energy budget, two-thirds of it going to electric power generation. As an indication of the shift Carter envisages, coal is expected to provide half of the new energy needed between now and 1985 to meet growing demand.

The coal plan is, in effect, a plan for increased electrification, even though the growth in electric power demand has been quite low in recent years, and some uses of electric power could be better served by other energy sources and technologies. Now 28.4 percent of the nation's energy budget is electricity, but over half of the new energy between now and 1985 would take that form under Carter's proposals.

**MANY OBSERVERS FRANKLY THINK** that Carter's proposals requiring coal for newly constructed utility and some industrial boilers, mandating conversion from gas and oil when possible, and providing tax credits for conversion will have little impact on industry decisions.

On the one hand, the requirements for conversion are riddled with easy loopholes. On the other, most businesses that convert to coal would probably do it anyway, even without the tax credit, which will be just another government gift to business rather than needed incentive.

Meeting Carter's 1985 goal for coal production would require rapid acceleration of the growth of the industry, but since it is now operating below capacity such expansion may be feasible. However, most observers agree that environmental standards would be violated if the boom materializes and miners' power to guarantee safe working conditions will be challenged.

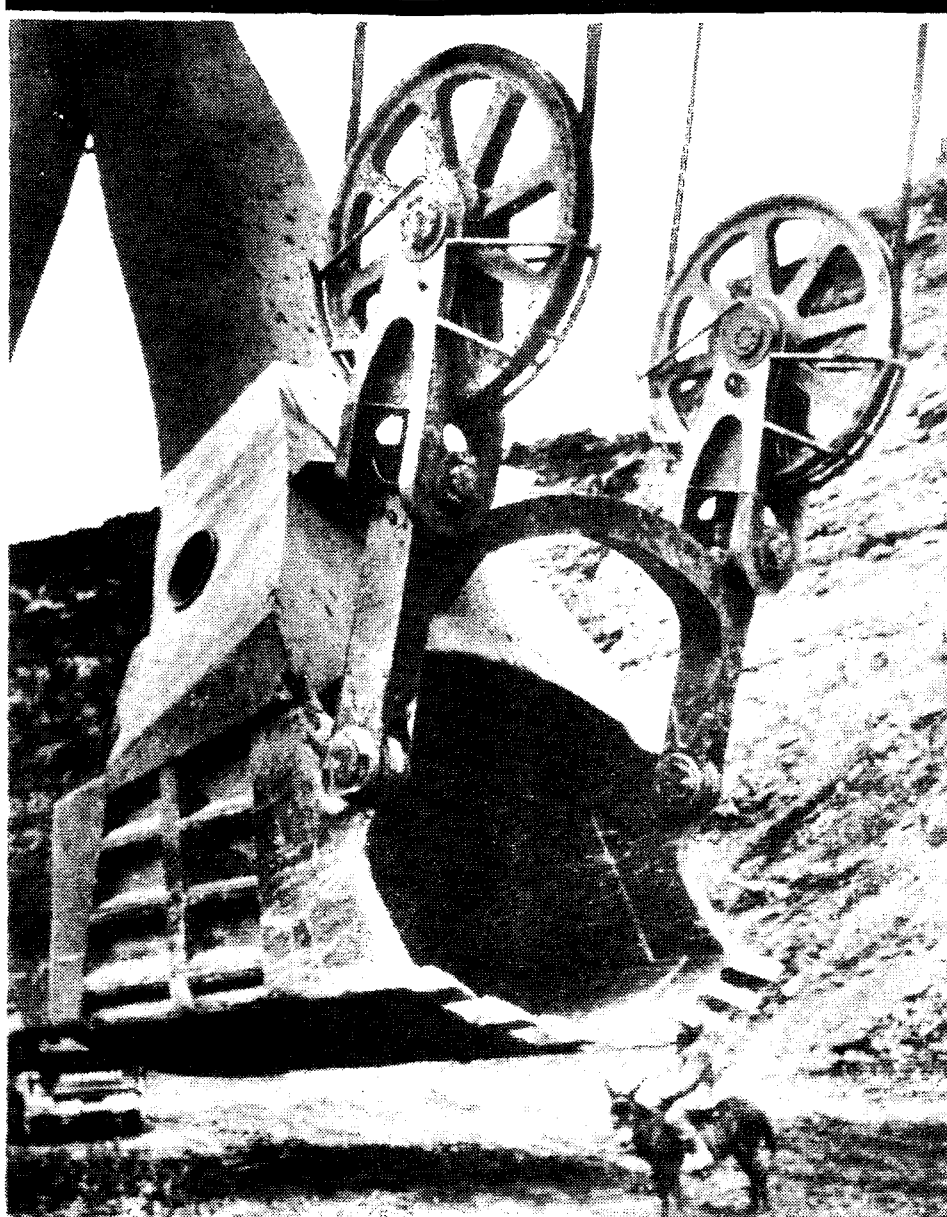
The coal industry, according to National Coal Association vice-president Herb Foster, is confident of beating the Carter target "if various environmental regulations don't prohibit it."

But Hans Landsberg, coal director of the Center for Energy Policy Research at Resources for the Future, sees similar problems and draws a different conclusion: "To get coal that quickly and in these quantities and to burn it under environmentally safe conditions is simply not possible."

Coal executives also want to stop the rebelliousness of the miners and to weaken the mine safety requirements in order to give them a freer hand to produce a steady, growing stream of coal.

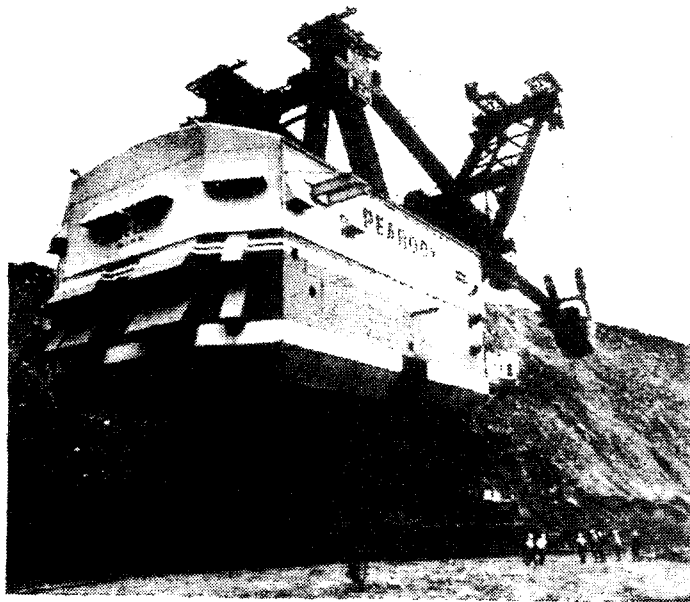
**EVEN IF THE COAL IS PRODUCED,** it is possible that the demand won't grow as fast as expected. Conversion of small industrial boilers to coal is often difficult to do within Clean Air Act standards. Electricity demand may continue to grow slowly. New solar technologies and improved conservation could also dampen some demand for electricity and thus for coal.

# SHOULD COAL PRODUCTION BE UPPED?



Photos/Earl Dorrer

*The only way to increase coal production dramatically is to increase strip mining, with increased destruction to the land and environment.*



Also, even though the industry could probably get one billion tons of coal a year out of the ground by 1985, burning all that coal would increase levels of sulfur dioxide, nitrous oxide, fine ash particles and potentially dangerous trace metals in the air even with the best pollution control technology available. Scrubbers have become effective and reliable according to most observers, but they can't catch everything harmful that goes up the stacks.

In the industry vision, the vast expansion of coal production would also accelerate strip mining of western coal, which is lower in sulfur but also lower in energy-per-ton than most eastern coal. A wild west coal rush could destroy an often fragile ecology, ruin agricultural land and gulp down scarce water.

Sixty percent of the coal from 332 mines that the National Coal Association reports as ready to open or expand before 1985 would come from west of the Mississippi. By comparison, 80 percent of coal today comes from east of the

Mississippi.

Emphasis on strip-mined coal from the West rather than eastern coal will slow growth in employment from any coal boom, since stripping requires only one-third the labor needed for deep mines. The United Mine Workers would also be weakened, since it is having trouble organizing western miners.

The hopes and fears for western strip mines may have been drastically altered by a requirement in the 1977 Clean Air Act amendments for utilities to install the "best available technology" for cleaning plant effluents. If eastern power companies have to buy the expensive scrubbers in any case, then they will have less reason to import low-sulfur and low-energy coal from far out west.

**ANTICIPATING AND TRYING TO** head off environmental objections to expanded coal production, Dow Chemical corporate energy director Gerald L. Decker recently put together a National Coal Policy Project that included industry rep-

resentatives and various individuals identified as environmentalists. Their joint report represented a compromise on numerous issues but conceded much to industry, such as allowing some "high walls" of earth to remain in stripped areas, speeding up licensing procedures for new power plants, and allowing more variances on air pollution standards.

John McCormick, Washington representative of the Environmental Policy Center, sharply criticized the Project for limiting participation to industrialists and environmentalists, for attempting to circumvent public debate of issues in Congress and for adopting "technically incorrect" conclusions. "They tried to portray these issues as if they were of concern only to two interests, environmentalists and industry, as if farmers, railroads, labor, American Indians and other groups have no interest in coal policy," he says.

Coal executives, who hope to label environmentalists who attack the project conclusions as "extremist," now have a new lobbying weapon. Asked if he was going to use the report with Congress to weaken the strip mine bill, for instance, the former head of Consolidation Coal reportedly replied, "What do you think I'm here for—waste my time?"

Critics of Carter's energy policies think that the emphasis on coal is symptomatic of fundamental errors of judgment that will have further harmful consequences in years to come. By boosting coal and centralized electrical power systems, the die may be cast in such a way that more nuclear power plants may be called for in the future to supplement coal in an all-electric economy, according to Rob Scott, energy researcher with Barry Commoner's Center for the Biology of Natural Systems.

**ALSO, THE COMMITMENT TO COAL** may lead to decisions to make gas and liquid fuels from coal. A single synthetic gas plant yielding 250 million cubic feet per day would now cost a staggering \$1.5 billion and produce gas at \$3.50 to \$4.50 per thousand cubic feet (compared with the regulated natural gas price of \$1.46), according to J. Glenn Seay, executive director of the Institute of Gas Technology. Although gas made from coal has some advantages over direct burning, such as eliminating need for conversion of gas boilers, cleaner burning and exploitation of existing pipelines, there would still be environmental problems in mining coal, new health problems in the conversion plants and the continuing limitations of relying on a non-renewable fuel.

Commitment to coal gasification could also shut out production from biological sources—not only waste but masses of ocean kelp, water hyacinths in the South and other currently unused plants that are, of course, renewable sources. Seay admits that methane can be made in the same price range from biomass as from coal but in smaller, more dispersed, less capital-intensive plants, but believes biomass can't yield the quantities of gas needed. The federal research budget reflects corporate and government bias in favor of non-renewable coal, which will receive \$630 million in research money this fiscal year compared to \$20 million for biomass.

In any case, the mad rush for coal is predicated on the unavailability of sufficient domestic oil and natural gas. In his book, *The Poverty of Power*, Barry Commoner disputes that conclusion, arguing that there is enough oil and gas to see the country through until there is a complete conversion to solar power without having to accelerate coal production.

Since the oil corporations now jealously guard all information and control all resources to test that hypothesis, some people—such as Sen. George McGovern—have proposed that a parallel federal oil and gas company be established. Short of direct public control of the oil companies, their capital, their reserves and their exploration programs, that may be the only way to discover if there is enough oil and gas available so that mountains of coal need not be moved in order to power the American economy. But such proposals, one Senate staffer sadly remarked, are "treated as the work of a madman."



The underlying issues raised by the coal strike are whether corporate ownership is consistent with an energy industry that serves the people, and whether workers' democracy is compatible with corporate power. These are inseparable from the specific disputes between the companies and the United Mine Workers.

Since the oil crisis of 1973-74, the federal government has placed increasing reliance on coal as an energy source. Carter's program has centered on converting industry from oil and gas to coal. Carter's goal is to double coal production by the mid-'80s, but also to leave control of energy and the conversion process to the corporations. That has meant government support for bidding up the price of oil and gas to facilitate a rising price structure in order to give the corporations the "incentive" to deliver the energy we all need.

In response to this strategy, the oil corporations have moved massively into ownership of coal, giving them an unprecedented stranglehold on the nation's energy supply. Since 1973-74 they and other corporations have expanded capacity to meet the anticipated explosion in demand.

The corporation-centered government policy has already generated an endemic inflationary force at the heart of the economy. Expensive energy must inhibit balanced development capable of meeting the people's needs in food, housing, health and public services, and of providing full employment essential to a democratic society. High energy prices have less to do with real costs of producing and delivering energy than with providing the corporations with the incentive to do so. It sacrifices the nation's well-being and its interest in cheap and serviceable energy at the altar of corporate ownership.

In the short run, government-corporate strategy has produced overcapacity in coal, aggravated by the recession in steel and in the world economy as a whole, and by the time lag in industry conversion to coal. This provides the immediate backdrop to the coal strike.

#### Industry wanted a strike.

In November 1976, when coal prices were sagging, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that coal "analysts" believed it would "take a supply-curtailling coal miners' strike ... widely expected in December 1977," to help "strengthen prices materially." Well, now we have the strike along with the dislocations ramifying through the entire economy. And we have another object lesson in the disparity between the strategies of profit-oriented enterprise and the public interest.

If coal is to play a key role in the nation's energy mix, supply must be reliable and production and delivery efficient. That cannot be assured without a labor force steadily at work and highly productive. And it will also require attracting more workers into the industry.

The corporation's contract demands reveal how they plan to achieve a docile labor force within the framework of an investment-for-profit regime. They will offer a higher nominal wage rate but take it back (and then some) by speed-up and by depriving the workers of their safety, health and well-being.

The corporations are taking their stand now in the belief that the outcome of the present contract struggle will set the pattern for years to come. That stand involves reducing the union, which they believed to be weak from internal division, to an appendage of corporate policy, and destroying the miners' power to influence working conditions and to share in control over their health and pension programs.

The corporations have therefore demanded the shift from industry-wide, joint union-company controlled health and pension programs to company-controlled schemes entered into with commercial insurance companies. These would substantially reduce health benefits. They demand unprecedented powers to fire, fine, and suspend union safety committeemen, and any miners who act against unsafe conditions or arbitrary management measures.

They demand a seven-day production week and compulsory overtime. They demand the reduction of training time for

## EDITORIAL

# STRIKING FOR DEMOCRACY



new miners and the elimination of union protection for such miners in their first 30 days of employment.

The corporations' plan for a "stable" and profitable labor force to shore up profitability in the short run and to guarantee it in the long run is to destroy the industry-wide solidarity of the workers, break the power of the union at the mine site, and thereby reduce the miners to a condition of defenseless dependency. It is, in short, to establish an industrial feudalism in coal, to the glory of "free enterprise."

This plan, however, cannot produce a stable, productive labor force. Unhealthy, unsafe, autocratic mining conditions will be conducive neither to sustained productivity nor to a reliable supply uninterrupted by worker rebellion and strikes. It is also inconsistent from top to bottom with the miners' human rights and with the principles of industrial and political democracy.

#### The miners' plan.

The miners have a different plan rooted precisely in, if not altogether establish-

ing, those rights and principles—a plan that corporations have determined to resist at all costs, especially at all costs to the public. The miners drew up their plan at their 1976 Cincinnati convention and in district conferences last year. It is directed both to greater worker self-control in the mines, to insure safety and health standards, and to greater equality among workers (including the retired) in wages and in restored and improved health and pension benefits. It is designed to spread the work in a time of unemployment through a six-hour regular work day, the prohibition of Sunday work and high premiums on overtime.

The miners saw their health program deteriorate under John L. Lewis and Tony Boyle in the 1960s and early '70s. And because its funding was tied to royalties on production, the health plan undermined already inadequate safety standards in the mines. Miners saw their pension funds insufficiently guaranteed against rising costs of living and outright depletion. They rebelled in an unprecedented wave of "wildcat" strikes in the 1970s. Over 90 percent of these strikes were in mid-contract over safety and health or pension benefits, not wages. These rebellions were directed against both the companies and the top union leadership.

In the course of recent internal union struggles, the miners have achieved a democratization of their union. They now formulate by conference and ratify by rank-and-file vote their contract conditions, and they retain considerable autonomy at the local level in dealing with grievances. In the conditions they are fighting for now, they are saying in effect that safe mines, and worker participation in establishing and enforcing working conditions are most conducive to a productive labor force and to a reliable coal supply. If the American economic system says no to the miners it is also saying that worker democracy and corporate capitalism are incompatible.

#### "Anarchy" and democracy.

Many pro-corporatists are virtually saying just that in bemoaning the "anarchy" and "chaos" in the UMW and hankering for the good old days when a strong union "boss" like Lewis ruled the union at the expense of rank-and-file initiative—the union "bossism" that the Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin acts were heralded as restraining or ending. To the devotees of the corporate system, no less than to the Tories of yesteryear, democracy is "chaos."

The coal corporations apparently believe that the contract UMW president Arnold Miller originally accepted would put an end to local miners' initiative and give the companies power over the workers in place of the union. Only company terrorism of the 19th and early 20th century variety, coupled with the oppressive powers of the state, could force the miners to submit to that kind of reactionary restoration.

The class struggle in coal is of profound significance for the future of American labor as a whole and to the prospects for democracy in American society. If the miners can be defeated, it will set a pattern for a corporate offensive against labor in other industries, especially as the struggle over income and benefits sharpens with the continuing stagnation of the world capitalist economy.

The miners' fight is labor's fight. The lack of overt labor solidarity so far in backing the miners indicates an appalling lack of foresight and courage among American labor leaders. But the same may be said for the rest of us: The miners' fight is also that of all those of us who are concerned for an economy serving the people and consistent with maintaining and extending democratic practices and principles.

Government intervention, biased as it is toward corporate control of energy, will sharpen the issue of industrial democracy versus corporate priorities.

It is not too late for the coal strike to elicit the rise of rank-and-file labor solidarity movements and the emergence of a labor leadership ready to meet new challenges. At this writing, signs of such responses are already arising. ■

## THE ISSUES

#### Negotiators:

The United Mine Workers union, with 160,000 working members, and the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, an industry association representing 130 coal companies.

#### Primary issue in the strike:

**Wildcat strikes.** The tentative agreement, rejected by the union's bargaining council, provided for \$20 per day penalties for miners who threaten, participate in or otherwise encourage wildcat strikes—including miners who honor picket lines. After ten days, the company could cut off all health benefits. Companies would also be empowered to suspend or fire wildcatting miners.

**Wages.** The tentative contract grants a \$2.35 raise over the life of the agreement—37 percent according to the UMW. Based on the average hourly wage, however, *Coal Patrol* calculates that the actual increase would be 30 percent. The cost-of-living allowance is eliminated, so inflation would further cut into the raise.

**Health benefits.** Tentative agreement would dismantle the industry-wide health program, enabling each company to set

up separate plans. Miners would have to pay deductibles of up to \$500 per year. Not clear if miners moving from one company to another would transfer health benefits with them.

**Safety.** Tentative agreement permits "production incentive plans" that district officials believe would create "extremely dangerous" safety conditions in the mines. Trainee period reduced from 90 to 45 days.

**Pensions.** Miners who retired before 1974 would receive a \$25 per year increase in their pension checks of \$250. No equalization with miners who retired after 1974, who receive \$470 per month.

**Hours.** Tentative agreement permits work on Sunday.

**Union and job rights.** Tentative agreement establishes 30-day probationary period—no union protection—for new employees.

**Non-union mines.** Tentative agreement removes royalty on non-union coal run through union preparation plants, thereby increasing the competitive advantage of non-union operators.

**Right to strike.** Tentative agreement grants no local right to strike, a demand named by the 1976 UMW convention as a bargaining priority.



# Letters

## An exercise in futility

**FAIL TO SEE THE RATIONALE** of banning the Nazis and the Klan while letting the rest of the reactionaries go. The "right-to-lifers," the Stop ERA people, the anti-busing people, Anita Bryant and her ilk, and the people who want prayer in school, as well as the rightwing evangelicals, are no less dangerous and no less lawless than the Nazis and the Klan.

But the government is not about to ban these groups. The "right-to-lifers" are, in fact, the government's pets. Like Albert Berger, I, too, am a socialist, a Jew, and a civil libertarian. I agree with him that we should rely on our own strength to protect ourselves. To rely on a capitalist government to protect one by banning rightwing groups is right in line with the strategy of relying on liberal capitalist politicians to give one one's rights.

I am not about to rely on the government to protect me from anti-semitism, unless I am an actual victim of crime, when I have seen that same government beat anti-war demonstrators and striking workers in the streets while bowing and scraping to "right-to-lifers" and anti-busing people.

When the Klu Kluxers and Nazis rape people, kill people, beat up people, vandalize things, and commit other crimes I think they should be locked up for it. But to ban two or three rightwing groups while letting the rest go seems to me an exercise in futility.

—Karen Moshewitz  
Indianapolis

## "Germanization"?

**I HAVE FOLLOWED YOUR COV-**erage, of the right-wing reaction to terrorist tactics in West Germany with great interest. But I am disturbed by your acceptance of the term "Germanization" as if it were an explanation (*ITT*, Jan. 25) without much discussion of what classes, factions, etc., are behind the repression and hysteria that has taken hold in West Germany and who profits from it.

The rhetoric being put out by the Springer newspapers and others can be called right-wing reaction, or fascist

propaganda. Using the term "Germanization" leads to the absurdity of calling similar political developments in Europe the "Germanization" of Italy and France. Are Horst Mahler or Heinrich Boll German but not "Germanized"? Or the Red Army Faction, for that matter. Are similar anti-left and oppressive tactics in the U.S. proof that we too have fallen prey to the insidious "Germanization"?

Making "German" equivalent with suppression and right-wing reaction creates confusion and accepts the psychology of polarization that can't help but see any position that is pro-civil liberties as being anti-German.

Let's not be taken in by the tempting illusion that abusing power is the exclusive tendency of any one nationality.

—Tom Bradersen

## How peasants paint

**HOW SAD THAT ALL THAT EN-**thusiasm about China before Mao's death is gone. The article about communal art in China (*ITT*, Feb. 8) praises a particular cultural accomplishment, yet there is the doubt and the negativism, "...do other brigade members pull carts twice as heavy while some...paint?" It would be better if the author would come out and say it, that he's not convinced that the way Chinese peasants paint is any better than here in the USA for individuals. The writer would learn more from life if he would put out his social theories boldly. I would respect him for it. As it is, I wouldn't put him in a position where he would have to decide anything.

People have trouble with the concept of socialism (or maybe they're really snakes with forked tongues). The whole point is, the commune people willingly decide to do extra work so that some can paint. It's done by voting, by democracy. Or is the concept of democracy too unacceptable?

—Bob Barron  
Cupertino, Calif.

## Blue Collar

**OCCASIONALLY HOLLYWOOD** makes a movie about working people that is distinguished because it does not paint them as simps, wimps or cowboys. For all its faults, *Blue Collar* is such a film. That is why I was disappointed to see the treatment it received (*ITT*, Feb. 22).

*Blue Collar* is a significant American cultural happening for several reasons.

First, it treats the lives of production workers seriously. Second, it treats the problem of race relations among workers seriously—with neither the mushy liberalism of the usual Stanley Kramer-esque fare nor the phony militancy of the black exploitation genre. Third, it is distinguished by splendid and subtle performances by Harvey Keitel and Richard Pryor—performers whose talents have not been adequately tapped in previous movie efforts. Fourth, it puts all this within the context of three workers' relationships to their union, the government and their families. Fifth, it shows a significant development in the talents of writer/director Paul Schrader, whose nihilistic visions and cynicism are now taking more directed and politically significant forms.

*Blue Collar* is not great. The first half wanders aimlessly. There are serious limits to the film's political vision. But like it or not, agree with it or not, *Blue Collar* is significant because it has a political vision.

The media create media events. *Blue Collar* will not be one. That is why it is so irksome to find a socialist newspaper failing to develop and promote interest and discussion in this movie. P. Hertel either didn't have the space or the interest in developing the important questions that *Blue Collar* raises.

—Lois Morgenthal  
Chicago

## Mustangs

**IT WAS GOOD TO READ IN YOUR** Letters section that one socialist at least has concern and compassion for our voiceless fellow creatures, co-tenants with us of Planet Earth. I am referring to Harry R. Siegel's letter about the mercilessly massacred wild mustangs, only recently given a measure of protection. My long quarrel with 90 percent of the left is that the plight of animals v. that of their own species ranks near zero in their scale of concern.

—Sybil Sticht  
Walnut Creek, Calif.

## The 'others' did it

**I CAN'T AGREE WITH HARRY** Boyte (*ITT*, Feb. 15) that the fate of the Populist Movement in the '90s indicated "the decline of freedom in America." I do give the farmers credit for heroic efforts to develop cooperatives and to make an impact in politics, but they also showed "excessive democracy" in that they allowed collective enthusi-

asm in romantic individualism to substitute for advance preparation, and they put a lot of collective energy into assuring themselves that "others" were to blame.

I'm sure they made plenty of contractual and paranoid statements in their extremity, but we should be generous to them for the innovations and consciousness raising they provided their fellow Americans.

—W.J. Mechem  
La Grange, Ill.

## They don't need reserves

**AN AMERICAN CITIZEN CAN** be certain of three things: work, unemployment and death... but not always in that order!

Your editorial on full employment (*ITT*, Feb. 1) was very good but I do not believe the reserve army of the unemployed is an important factor except as a scare tactic employers use by letting us know we can be replaced. In a computerized capitalist economy millions of able-bodied and willing-to-work people become superfluous. A shorter work week is the solution but capitalism will not allow it.

—Art Liebrez  
Annandale, VA

## An egregious example

**I'VE READ AND ENJOYED *ITT*** for months but I must say that you've got the lousiest movie review section I've seen in any publication. I mean what the hell, who wants to go see a movie when a reviewer gives the whole story away. Who wants the surprise stolen from them?

David Szonyi's review of *The Boys in Company C* is an egregious example. He tells us exactly, or nearly exactly, how the movie ends. The task of the reviewer should be critical analysis, not a blow-by-blow account. Why don't you study some of the reviews in the *New Yorker* or bring in some of the excellent movie reviewers from *Cineaste*.

—Walt Hudson  
Evanston, Ill.

**Editor's Note:** Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

# DIALOG

## Newark: Don't blame victims

Your article on Mayor Kenneth Gibson and the rebuilding of Newark (*ITT*, Feb. 1) fell far short of what I expect from your fine paper. Reading the article, one would believe that white middle class households are to blame for Newark's decline while Newark's projected revival is simply an unexpected irony of the energy crisis. Most of the analysis turns on the question of racial dynamics—blaming "racial phobias" and referring to the "demographic trauma" that hit the city. Gibson sums up with "I think that Newark was given a bad name because of its racial makeup."

This analysis differs little from that of Big Business. Anthony Downs, president of Real Estate Research Corporation and chief urban adviser to Nixon, Ford and Carter, also tells us that neighborhoods decline because of "household

decisions." "The real force behind neighborhood change," Downs claims, "is the impact of people moving in, moving out, deciding to stay or deciding to look elsewhere for housing."

This is just another way of blaming the victim. No blame is assigned to those whose decisions have a real impact on the life of the city and its occupants—Newark's industrialists, bankers and the real estate industry.

Newark's industrial base has been eroded by industries that moved out to cheap labor areas. The loss of jobs and property tax revenue created a city that could no longer support its citizens. Banks redlined neighborhoods years ago. Blockbusting has been rampant; landlords milk buildings to abandonment and whole neighborhoods are leveled by interstate highway construction and urban renewal clearance. Much of Newark's population has been uprooted by these forces. They are poor, mostly black, and the economy has no use for them. Meanwhile Newark's remaining citizens are subjected to the highest property tax burden in the country. Those who could flee Newark did.

It's true, as T.D. Allman says, that Gibson is likened to caretaker of a graveyard. He presides over a city that can no longer provide a living for a large segment of its population. And his only hope to revive Newark's economy is by attracting private capital. Those who

control the purse strings of private investment are aware of Newark's strategic economic and geographical location—but capital investment dictates the terms, not the mayor. Their message is clear. Rid the city of its dependent, unemployed and black population and private capital will reshape the city as a commerce, finance and transportation center. Years ago the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey took over the Port of Newark. This bustling, productive port now pays a piddling amount to the city in lieu of property taxes. These are the investment terms for which Gibson can hope.

Paul R. Porter, an industrialist and author of *The Recovery of American Cities* spells out the scenario for us. He has proposed "that obsolete inner-city districts should be transformed into neighborhoods attractive enough to compete with suburbs, especially for people who work in the central district and nearby places. The poor should be 'helped' to relocate outside the inner city and should be assisted to find suitable housing and nearby work opportunities." The claim is that the poor and underemployed would be closer to industrial employment in outer areas.

Newark's story is part of a nationwide phenomenon particularly affecting the major cities of the north. As industries move to the south or abroad, our cities are being reshaped into centers of corporate and financial

activity. The captains of finance and industry along with their allies in all levels of government provide us with optimistic slogans of urban revival such as Detroit's Renaissance City, Chicago's "21 Plan," St. Louis' "Team 4 Plan" and D.C.'s "Year 2000 Plan." These are nothing more than elaborate plans for using limited federal funds to expand new corporate growth centers, to revive local tax bases and to upgrade neighborhoods for middle and upper income families. But there is no plan for the poor and a majority of the working class.

Once we understand the game plan, the crucial question remains. Can organized community resistance dictate its own terms or will the corporations and banks continue to have their way?

The future is unpredictable. In San Francisco the occupants of the International Hotel, now evicted after a nine-year struggle, continue to fight for their housing and their community. Initially the people's movements will be defensive. Stalemate is often possible. Occasionally offensive actions may succeed.

The scenario provides the foundation for community organizing in the '70s and '80s and the base upon which a national movement is emerging.

—Patrick Morrissey  
Shelterforce  
East Orange, N.J.



# PERSPECTIVES

□ FOR A NEW AMERICA □

## Is economic democracy a California dandelion?

By Sidney Lens

In California, where panaceas bloom like dandelions, some of the old New Leftists around Tom Hayden have conceived a doctrine called Economic Democracy. As explained by Derek Shearer, one of its fathers, it is "an eclectic and typically American approach," borrowing from Franklin Roosevelt, Upton Sinclair, John Blair, Ben Seligman, Bertram Gross, among others. Its goal, as the name implies, is a "democratic economy," built through alternative institutions such as food coops, and worker-owned stores and production units, thereby fashioning a "democratic culture within or alongside the dominant business culture." Its strategy is based on running "leftwing" candidates for local and state offices, and creating city and statewide organizations "around economic issues."

This is undoubtedly an attractive substitute for socialism to many people because as Shearer points out "socialism has a bad name in America." It connotes "government dictatorship" in Russia, China, Eastern Europe, and "bureaucracy and the welfare state" in England, Sweden and other countries. We have to get away from that label, he implies, not only by using softer language—e.g., economic

democracy—but adopting programs less harsh than traditional leftist planks such as a planned economy, social ownership of the banks, oil companies, basic industries.

As Hayden puts it, the radicalism of the 1960s must be replaced by the "common sense" of the 1970s.

I wonder.

No sensible humanist—or socialist—objects to adopting an "American approach" or the creation of alternative institutions. The more the merrier, in fact, for they indicate that ever larger groups of Americans are disassociating themselves from the shibboleths of the present system. But to make this the political goal for this generation is not an advance toward a better world but a cop-out. It deflects us from our real problems and from real solutions, into by-ways that are sterile and counter-productive.

Shearer speaks as if he has discovered something new. But in fact the underclasses have always forged alternative institutions. The first unionists, as far back as the 1790s, established producers cooperatives as a technique for winning strikes—by underselling their bosses. In the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s Robert Owen, Albert Brisbane, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Horace Greeley and many of our great writers and thinkers built alternative com-

munities such as New Harmony, Brook Farm and a host of "phalanxes"; and religious radicals formed dozens of settlements on the principle of share and share alike. Frances (Fanny) Wright established a community in Neshoba of white radicals and slaves (whom she bought from their masters), as an alternative means for ending slavery. Producers and consumers cooperatives also flourished for a while in the middle of the 19th century.

None of this endured; none of it brought leftists a broad constituency; none of it seriously challenged the status quo. And the chances that Hayden's "economic democracy" will lead us to the promised land—ultimately—is even smaller. It has two obvious and glaring defects: first, it addresses itself to lesser problems rather than the central ones; second, it delays and avoids confrontation with the national power structures that are responsible for today's problems.

What are those problems?

First and foremost is the nuclear arms race and the foreign policy of imperial aggrandizement on which it is based. When I last saw Hayden in Washington some time ago he showed me a quite good document on the arms race. But this is not made central to his political platform, for the same reasons that Shearer eschews the word "socialism" namely that Americans by and large favor the arms race (we need it, they say, to hold the Russians at bay and to gain jobs), and because most of the "reform" Democrats whom Hayden's movement is wooing feel it is politically costly to attack militarism.

Second is a national security state operating in secret, which defines "security" as military power and sets the national priorities so that spending for more armaments is considered essential, but spending for human needs is considered peripheral. It is idle, in my opinion, to talk about full employment, for instance, unless there is a simultaneous campaign to dismantle the national security state. And no amount of food coops, etc., can undertake that task; it requires a movement or political party that directly confronts the military-industrial complex at its source. It is not a matter of first building a political constituency (of left-wing Democrats, primarily), and then attacking the national security state. It is a matter of building a political constituency by attacking the national security state.

Third, the disarray of the American economy can no longer be considered episodic or temporary. The structure of the Pax Americana, based on freer international trade and acceptance of the dollar as the international medium of exchange, is collapsing rapidly. We confront astronomical foreign debts by the non-oil producing, less-developed countries (more than \$200 billion), which can backfire on our own U.S. (and world) banking system, causing untold industrial shutdowns. We also face angry allies who are being depleted because the dollar is no longer convertible to gold and is falling

rapidly in value. Like it or not we are at the beginning of a trade and monetary war such as the one which shook the 1930s and blended into World War II.

Moreover, the two welfare states which were developed under the New Deal and vastly expanded after the war—the welfare state for the poor (unemployment compensation, social security, welfare), which was intended to undercut thoughts of revolution, and the welfare state for the rich, the 100-odd billions given the upper classes annually through tax breaks and direct subsidies which was intended to keep the private enterprise system from bankruptcy—both welfare states have promoted deficits and debts which threaten the whole structure with ruination. Thus, what America needs is much more than economic democracy: it needs a planned economy to prevent continued dissipation of our resources and to allocate wealth and income equitably; it needs to establish social control over the conglomerates and transnationals—in most cases through social ownership.

Admittedly, these are massive projects and the American public is certainly not ready for them at this moment. But deep and enduring sickness requires deep and enduring remedies; it is not amenable to little patchworks. True, the word "socialism" is in disrepute. But the concept "economic democracy" is a next-to-useless bandaid. It is, in effect, pie in the sky, for if we win what Hayden and Shearer want us to win, we will have pretty much what we have now, with minor modifications.

Shearer calls on us to "focus on winning state and local elections not national ones, on building state and local political organizations, not a third party or a national left organization, and on founding and running democratic enterprises, schools and publications." We must learn to crawl, presumably, before we learn to walk. Only after such preliminaries, Shearer says, can we put forth a Presidential candidate and "challenge for national power." But assuming all this is possible, we would still have to give those we are seeking to convert a vision of what we are working toward. Otherwise why should they vote for us instead of, say, Birch Bayh? That vision should include—I repeat—an end to the arms race, a dismantling of the national security state, a planned economy, social ownership and/or control.

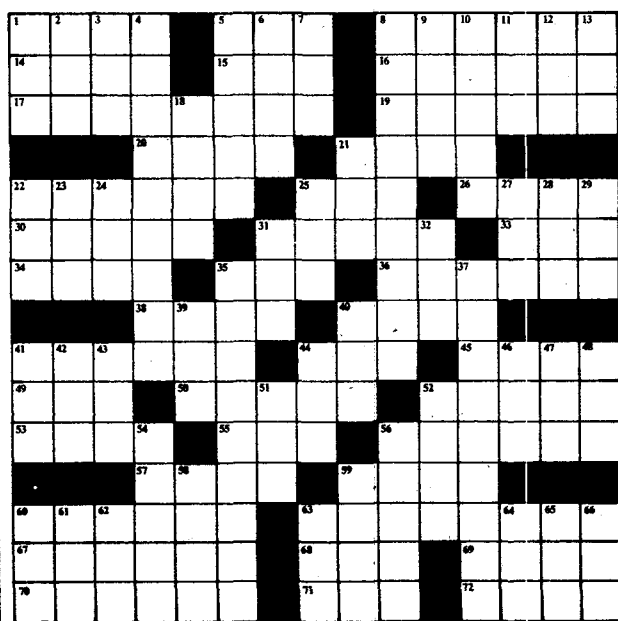
But to win a constituency on a vision no broader than "jobs" or "alternative institutions" means having to run for the Presidency on the same program—an updated New Deal, an updated Keynesianism. It will not be possible suddenly to escalate the rhetoric and politics to the kind of basic changes needed to save us—and the world—from holocaust and economic disintegration.

That is why the Hayden-Shearer panacea is a cop-out, not an answer. I can understand that after years of tilting windmills they want to enjoy some success—or what is called success. Too many people who have tried that route, however—Bayard Rustin, for instance—have found they have had to moderate and moderate their position ever further toward the mainstream, until in the end they have become indistinguishable from other establishment politicians. I hope this doesn't happen to Tom Hayden or Derek Shearer and others on the left who are designing similar scenarios.

Sidney Lens is a veteran journalist. His latest book is *The Day Before Doomsday* for Doubleday.

## Heroes

By David Mermelstein



### Across:

- 1 Oriental name
- 5 Possesses
- 8 FIRST NAME OF MAN HONORED IN CHINA!
- 14 AGING REVOLUTIONARY
- 15 AGING CHAMP
- 16 Lone assassin?
- 17 MARTYRED BLACK LEADER
- 19 Condition
- 20 Dutch painter
- 21 Thirst quencher
- 22 Furniture items
- 25 Total
- 26 Furry animal
- 30 Hurts
- 31 FIRST NAME OF SUFFRAGIST
- 33 College in Iowa
- 34 Needle case
- 35 Nixonian button
- 36 Rodeo activity
- 38 Sign gas
- 40 Common French infinitive

- 41 Tull or Pugh
- 44 PART OF DECEASED CHINESE LEADER'S NAME
- 45 Japanese naval station
- 49 Gold in Cordoba
- 50 Snake
- 52 REVOLUTIONARY LEADER
- 53 Part of a hat
- 55 Cousin of Wed.
- 56 A privilege
- 57 Cereals
- 59 Swedish court star
- 60 Throbbing
- 63 PROFOUND REVOLUTIONARY ESTEEMED BY 8, 14, 44, 52 Across & 4, 22, 63 Down
- 67 PACIFIST LEADER
- 68 Irish org.
- 69 Mine, in Nice
- 70 Come up
- 71 Torme or Ott
- 72 Unless: Lat.

### Down:

- 1 Climate: Abbr.
- 2 Mine, in Rome
- 3 Cousin of Pac.
- 4 DECEASED REVOLUTIONARY LEADER
- 5 Corridors
- 6 Charity
- 7 "\_\_\_\_\_ of one, half-..."
- 8 HERO OF 52 ACROSS
- 9 Bone in Greek
- 10 Horde
- 11 Dine
- 12 Prefix meaning more than
- 13 Leaders: Abbr.
- 18 Paddles
- 21 Word in Inge title
- 22 MARTYRED REVOLUTIONARY
- 23 Kind of trick
- 24 Irish exclamation
- 25 "\_\_\_\_\_ in the morning..."
- 27 Where on *parle francais*
- 28 *Oui's* alternative
- 29 Beer vat
- 31 Evangelist's concern
- 32 Conjunction
- 35 WATERGATE SLEUTHS?
- 37 EXTINCT BEING OR SECTARIAN HERO?
- 39 Feminist objective
- 40 Kind of snuff
- 41 Patient sufferer
- 42 "To \_\_\_\_\_ is human..."
- 43 Familiar Fr. pronoun
- 44 Permit
- 46 Caucasian language
- 47 No longer working: Abbr.
- 48 Eng. cathedral city
- 51 \_\_\_\_\_ Kapital
- 52 Roll up
- 54 Shapes
- 56 Lesson
- 58 U.S. tennis player
- 59 Expose
- 60 Eastern title
- 61 Golfing goal
- 62 Prefix for one
- 63 REVOLUTIONARY LEADER
- 64 Pierre's friend
- 65 Varangians
- 66 Found on some faces



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## SPORTS

# Ali, the Greatest, goes down to challenger Spinks

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**NAISON**


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**F**OR ALL KINDS OF REASONS—including my own approaching middle age, I hated to see Muhammad Ali get beaten, but I'm glad to see Leon Spinks was the one to do it.

Spinks is in the tradition of a great line of heavyweight champions, an unpolished brawler in the mold of Jack Dempsey, Rocky Marciano, and Joe Frazier. An aging Ali used every trick in his considerable repertoire to confuse the young fighter—ropes a dope, the Ali shuffle, counter punching on the move, slugging toe to toe—but he couldn't repulse Spinks' relentless attack.

With utter fearlessness Spinks took the best shots Ali had to give and kept up a level of action that would have exhausted most heavyweights in eight rounds. Ali and his handlers kept expecting Spinks to tire, but he kept coming up with a second wind every time he looked ready to be taken. In the 15th round Spinks looked near collapse: he was hurt, wobbly and exhausted, but he dug down deep inside himself and rocked Ali back with several powerful punches that took the wind out of Ali's sails and put him on the defensive.

In recent fights, as Ali's speed has dwindled, his greatest asset has been—in addition to his tactical genius—his will power and ability to absorb punishment. Beneath all the hype and psychological warfare that he used to demoralize his opponents, Ali showed, in the times when he was in trouble, that he was a champion of unparalleled courage. In the Shavers fight, in the third Norton fight, final round counterattacks saved Ali from defeat. He tried that against Spinks, but Spinks stood up in the barrage and ended the fight as the aggressor.

This performance puts Spinks in good company. In the 15-odd years that Ali has been on center stage, only one other heavyweight has been his equal in that intangible quality that sports people call "heart"—Joe Frazier. Spinks' handlers modeled his style on Frazier's—a style that requires you to take punishment to give punishment—and the young man showed himself equal to the task.

Ali's departure from the championship leaves a gap that can never be filled. As no other athlete in modern history, Ali defined the terms on which he practiced his art. He rose above the commissioners, the politicians, the promoters and journalists who controlled the world of boxing to become a symbol of resistance to tens of millions of people throughout the world; and a figure of special importance to black Americans.

Leon Spinks has neither the ability nor the desire to play such a role. A young man who grew up in dire poverty, Spinks is as awkward and unpolished in his speech as he is in the ring.

But perhaps because of that Spinks is an easier figure to identify with than Ali—especially in a less polarized political climate. To the millions of people who cheered for him, Ali was a figure of heroic proportions, a person whose charisma stemmed from his uncommon—even transcendent—grace, beauty, intelligence, and moral courage. He was someone people aspired to be like, who expanded the horizons of our imaginations, who was not defined by the boundaries of our daily experience.

Leon Spinks, on the other hand, is a familiar figure. There are people like him in every poor neighborhood, not particu-

larly pretty, not particularly brilliant, who struggle successfully to live a decent life in the face of the grimmest surroundings. Hard work, family feeling—and a lot of good luck—pull them through, and gracefulness and "style" are virtues they often cannot afford.

Ali is special, but I'm glad to see someone of less heroic proportions be his successor. Leon Spinks may be more of a plodder than a "superstar"—but so are most people—and it's good to see "one of us" hold the heavyweight crown.

—Mark Naison

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**HEUMANN**


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**T**HERE WERE A LOT OF HAPPY people after Leon Spinks upset Muhammad Ali for the heavyweight boxing championship—the young champ and his family, his fans, his management and anyone who could find someone who was willing to take their bets on odds as high as 12-1. CBS is also overjoyed. I wasn't the only one to accuse them of creating a mismatch to boost ratings. I thought Spinks was years away from fighting for the title but it looks like Ali may have been fighting a year too late.

Ali used a strategy that lost him four out of the five first rounds and he was forced to fight from behind. Spinks was expected to run out of gas in the later rounds but fooled everyone by coming on and winning the last three rounds in convincing style. Ali boxed himself out of a crown and a potential \$12 million fight being set up with Ken Norton. But he was a gracious loser, convinced that he could come back and do what no other fighter has ever done: win the heavyweight crown three times.

Ali will probably get his chance. He still is magic at the box office and Bob Arum, the man who has Spinks under contract for his next six bouts, claims that this will happen. Spinks will fight a reputable foe next, while a big money event is prepared for the summer. Another thriller in Manila, people speculate.

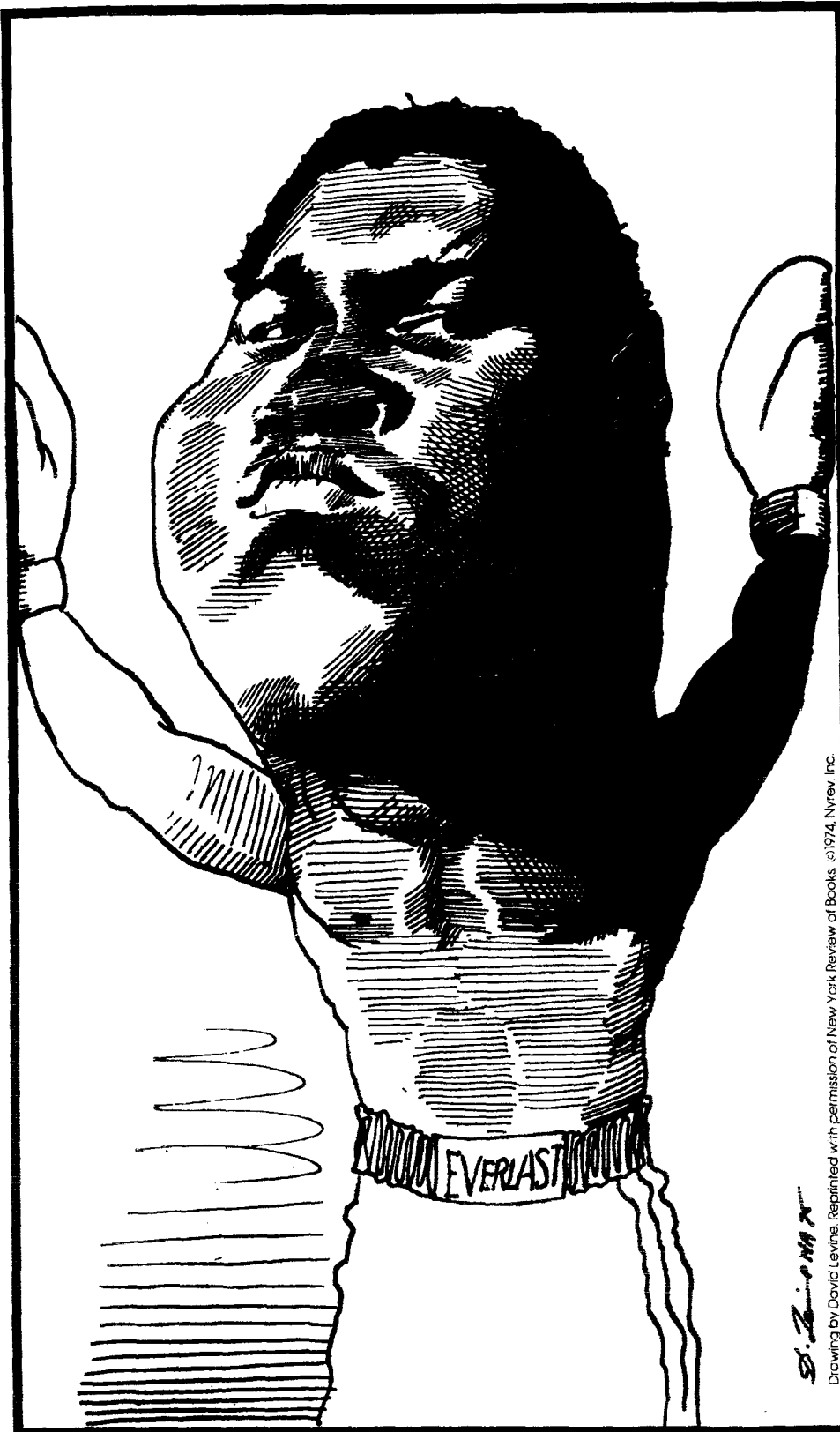
The fight itself was not a classic. Ali was never hurt and Spinks' swarming style was effective because he faced a man who refused to counterpunch for more than half the fight.

Spinks has still not been tested, but he proved he could go the distance, take a punch and fight till the last bell sounds. He has an iron chin and a game heart, two intangibles that may take him a long way. The fight was a perfect moment for him. The title and unlimited exposure coupled with an immeasurable learning experience.

Ali learned a lot, too. He really is too old now and even wits are not enough against determined youth. His fast right lead is gone with his legs. He is a shell of his former self, even though what remains is still a class act.

Ali's presence for boxing and sports in general transcended the fact that he was the greatest boxer of the 20th century. His personality captured the interest of people who never pay attention to sport. His face is as well known as anyone in the world today. He fought the American government and won. He refused to be any man but his own and won that fight too. He proved that sports is the province of politics and nationalism by exposing the hatred heaped on him when he refused to play the part of the humble black American. He shook off his Christian name, became a Muslim and paraded his beliefs for all to see.

How long Spinks will stay on top is



Drawing by David Levine. Reprinted with permission of New York Review of Books. ©1974, Nrviv, Inc.

anyone's guess. Ali probably will fight one more time, but it will be his swan song, win or lose. There is no one in the big weight class that can approach Ali's impact, but there will be plenty of faces looming out of the sports pages proclaiming their greatness. Ken Norton, Jimmy Young and Ernie Shavers are waiting for their chance again. Larry (The Assassin) Holmes seems to be the most imposing of all the young leather slingers.

For now, it's Leon Spinks. He is the

most inexperienced fighter ever to win the crown and the first to capture it by a decision since James Braddock outpointed Max Baer in the upset of 1937. Forty-four years from now boxing fans will still remember Muhammad Ali. It's time for Leon Spinks to create his own legend. He's filling a big set of shoes and he's as happy as hell to be doing so.

—Joe Heumann

Joe Heumann writes frequently on boxing for IN THESE TIMES.

## World Youth Festival Tours 1978

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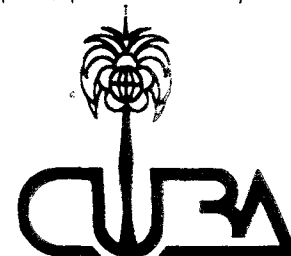
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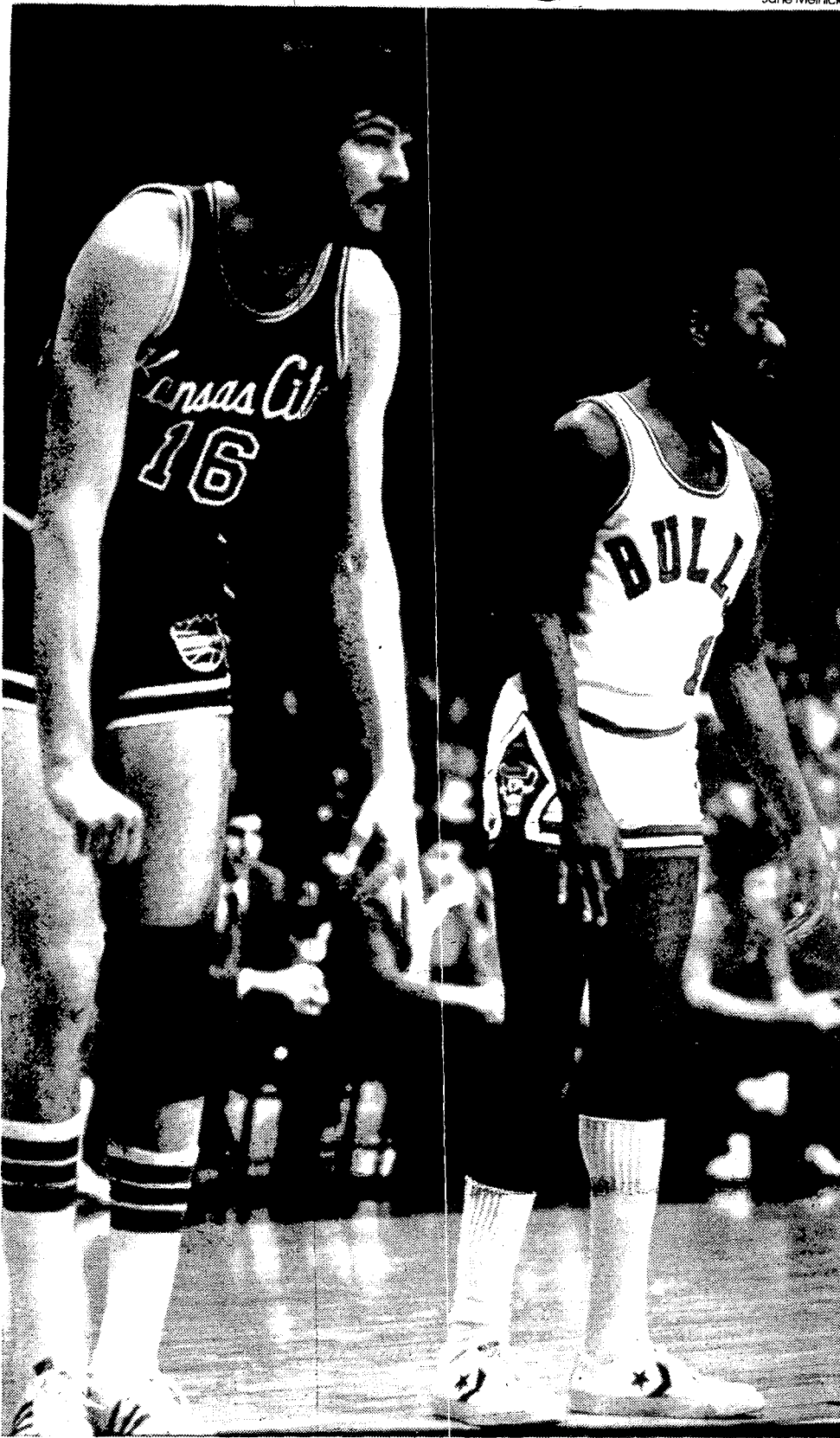
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# 'Gonna getcha every time'



Chicago Bulls' Wilbur Holland (right).

Continued from page 24.

picked up as a free agent by the Chicago Bulls, whose intention was to spell 6'1" Norm Van Lier occasionally with Holland.

The southpaw shooter from New Orleans University quickly emerged as an unafraid and accurate outside gunner and ball-swiper. He finished the season alongside Van Lier in a miniature Chicago backcourt as the Bulls were the League's hottest team over the last four months. Holland tallied an unexpected 14-point per game clip.

This year Holland has become increasingly respected throughout the loop. His scoring average has reached nearly 18 points. Fears of his being burned defensively have become superfluous to rabid Bulls fans who have seen Holland as a clutch scoring machine.

The longest-running small-man act in the NBA is Houston's irrepressible Calvin Murphy. The 5'9" marksman from Niagara began play with the big boys in 1970 when, as a San Diego Rocket draft choice, he became the NBA's lone under 6 foot specimen.

Murphy's leaping prowess, coupled with his uncanny eye, proved him the exception that started crumbling the NBA rule. He enjoyed a 15.8 rookie sojourn with the Rockets and became a fixture with the club when they relocated in Houston the next year.

Murphy's dead-eye free-throw shooting made it suicide to foul him, yet it seemed the only strategy capable of slowing him down.

Murphy's steady influence and consistent scoring helped the young Rockets to their first Central division crown in 1977.

## Porter, Walker, DiGregorio.

The flamboyant and cocky 5'11" Kevin Porter of the New Jersey Nets brings a crowd-pleasing dimension to a floundering team. Unhappy after being relegated to part-time stature with the Detroit Pistons, Porter asked to be dealt away. He immediately showed the Nets the form that brought him the 1974-75 assist crown with an 8.0 average.

Rounding out the top five of NBA economy sizes would be Cleveland's Clarence (Foots) Walker, who opened the Cavs' season as a 5'11" partner to the famed

Walt Frazier in the backcourt. Walker, from unheralded West Georgia University, was a third round pick for Cleveland in 1974 and began cementing a reputation as a hustling and winning guard.

Not to be forgotten are two six-foot sparkplugs whose play has not measured up in 1978 to their own past standards.

Los Angeles' Ernie DiGregorio had a memorable Rookie-of-the-Year session in 1973-74 when he led Buffalo to its first winning season, and paced the league in assist average (8.2) and free throw percentage (.902).

Slowed by a knee operation, Ernie "D," 27, became defensively suspect and his \$300,000 contract seemed a white elephant for the financially troubled Braves.

DiGregorio's travels may have ended last month when he was released by the Lakers. Coach Jerry West claimed the former premier passer of pro basketball did not fit into his plans.

Another former great has seen his minutes played drop drastically. Once the scourge of the ABA with his 25-foot, three point bombing, San Antonio's Louie Dampier has resigned himself to a fill-in role with the Central Division leaders.

The six foot Dampier was a fixture on Kentucky's ABA powerhouse for nine years. In his second NBA season Dampier still can bag quick points, but, at 33, plays a more inspirational part with the Spurs. He recently passed the 15,000 point lifetime total.

Better fortune has finally befallen another surgical story, Denver's Mack Calvin. Once the scourge of the defunct ABA as a 20 point scorer and passing wizard, Calvin has lately returned to a larger role for the thinned Nugget backline, overcoming severe knee problems.

As with all of the NBA "mity mites," the well-traveled Calvin is a fan's special favorite. And while the place of the small man in pro roundball is not permanently assured, his popularity is a throwback to that time when basketball followers had no difficulty identifying with the men on the floor.

To rephrase Randy Newman, short NBA people have surely "got somebody." *Barry Codell is a Chicago writer who writes frequently on sports for IN THESE TIMES.*

## In These Times report to readers published

A year and a quarter after the first issue of *IN THESE TIMES* rolled off the presses, the paper has taken stock of its achievements, clarified its goals and evaluated its problems and prospects in a "Report to Friends and Supporters," just issued.

The report indicates that the paper's financial situation remains difficult, but that the annual deficit will be reduced by 38 percent this year. General Manager Nick Rabkin has announced a 1978 fund goal of \$125,000 to cover this operating deficit. "IN THESE TIMES has established itself journalistically and politically. We are not going to blow away. No one said it would be easy to make a socialist paper succeed in the U.S., but encouraging signs are emerging. Contributing to *IN THESE TIMES* will be an investment in our political future, not spitting in the wind," says Rabkin.

The report reiterates the paper's standing commitment to "making socialism a concrete public issue, related directly to the most pressing problems in American life... Achieving this goal requires that *IN THESE TIMES* becomes a widely read, respected, reliable, vital and interesting publication. It is through our presentation of the news—and the human drama and struggle that lie behind it—that we will communicate the vision of our project."

In its first year *IN THESE TIMES* achieved a circulation of 12,500—10,500

subscribers and 2,000 over-the-counter sales. It has set a goal of 23,000 subscribers and 4,000 over-the-counter sales by the end of 1978. To reach that goal the paper will try to mail a million pieces of promotional material to selected lists of names this year. This compares with 160,000 pieces last year.

The first 100,000 pieces of this promotional effort have already been mailed and the response thus far, according to Rabkin, has been "very encouraging." The industry standard is in the neighborhood of 2 percent response to these kinds of mailings. Projecting from what we've gotten so far, we will do much better than that."

A special fund has been established strictly for the purpose of financing the promotional effort. Its funding is entirely separate from the newspaper, and the effort depends on loans and grants in addition to the money that must be raised to meet the operating deficit. Loans to the special fund are repaid with receipts from sales.

The report also outlines the paper's development plans for the year ahead. Special attention will be paid to significant political developments in the electoral arena, labor, and the energy crisis. The paper intends to establish a Washington office as quickly as it is financially feasible.

Copies of the report are available on request from *IN THESE TIMES*, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622.

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*RADICAL AMERICA* is an independent socialist and feminist journal entering its second decade of publication. RA features articles about working class activity, past and present, plus analyses of racism and sexism, reports on organizing, historical studies of radicalism, and debates around socialist strategy.

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- Jim O'Brien's critical discussion of Leninist groups in the 70's.
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Some available back issues of RA feature these articles:

- An interview with Dorothy Healey on the CPUSA today (v. 11, no. 3).
- Barbara and John Ehrenreich on the Professional-Managerial Class (v. 11, no. 2).
- Ellen Cantarow on the Italian women's movement (v. 10, no. 6).
- Staughton Lynd on the legal assault against workers' rights (v. 10, n. 5).
- Roy Rosenzweig on organizing the unemployed in the 30's (v. 10, n. 4).

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## ART &lt;&gt; ENTERTAINMENT

## FILM

## Another old-fashioned sit-com

Sex-stereotyped title role keeps *Good-bye Girl* from being very entertaining.

**THE GOODBYE GIRL**  
Screenplay by Neil Simon  
Directed by Herbert Ross

Paula McHadden is having one hell of a time coping in New York. Not only has she been saddled with a daughter from an early, abortive marriage to an actor, but a second actor/lover has just deserted her to make an art film, and sublet her apartment right out from under her.

It seems if good-natured, but flagging Paula didn't have bad luck, she wouldn't have any luck at all. Now a third actor—young, brash Elliot Garfield from Chicago—wants to move in. He's paid his rent in advance and has the signed lease to prove it.

Paula is ready to scream.

If cute, romantic sitcoms are your thing, you'll enjoy *The Goodbye Girl*. There's plenty of domestic fun as Paula, Elliot, and daughter Lucy gradually learn to accommodate to each other and fall mutually in love. But there are a lot of broken dishes and squabbles about where the laundered underwear should hang before Lucy and Paula come to realize they've found a dependable man.

Richard Dreyfuss gives a very credible interpretation of the Chicagoan with the heart and moxie to tackle New York's flaky



Marsha Mason and Richard Dreyfuss in confrontation.

theatrical scene. His moods are versatile, his tongue is sharp, and his face is a lively panorama of expression.

Quinn Cummings is droll as the precocious ten-year-old who has seen it all happen before. It's her eventual crush on Garfield that gets Mom to open herself to the idea of love again.

But Marsha Mason has a tough time enlivening the sex-stereotyped title role. She's called on to be an over-the-hill dancer, a protective mother and a sweet, Cincinnati kid whose true goal in life is to interior decorate the living room, shop at Alexander's, and cook mush for the family breakfast.

You can't blame her for showing strain in this anachronistic framework. It's the title role, unfortunately, that keeps *The Goodbye Girl* from being a very entertaining comedy.

Neil Simon's dialogue is witty as always and he gives a sympathetic portrait of what it's like to try to make it in the New York show biz world. There's not much here to ponder after the credits roll, but all things considered, *The Goodbye Girl* is a cut or two above slurping beers and staring into the tube all night.

—Don Venes

Don Venes is a free-lance writer in Chicago.

## Documentary on gay liberation

## WORD IS OUT

By Mariposa Film Group

*Word Is Out* is a sensitive and much-needed documentary on gay liberation.

The Mariposa Film Group (Nancy and Peter Adair, Andrew Brown, Robert Epstein, Lucy Phenix and Veronica Selver) videotaped 200 interviews around the country, took 26 and edited them down to a two-hour-and-15-minute film.

They show us people of all races, classes and ages, from teenagers to 77-year-old poet Elsa Gidlow. Treading delicately on painful memories, the filmmakers draw out the collective experience from individual testimony—how each interviewee discovered his/her differentness; how some were married, happily or unhappily; how they came out, suffered at the hands of the psychiatric establishment, lost jobs and custody of children.

Several interviewees complain about the loneliness, especially in the 1940s and 1950s. All mention rejecting traditional sex role stereotypes, the difficulty of finding positive role models for their new lives and the realization that they must be those role models. Most say they had to make the link between individual different-

The emphasis is on emotionally stable, fulfilled individuals.

ness, suffering and self-denial and the consciousness that there were others like them before they could accept themselves.

Peter Adair intended to make a film with positive characters—no tormented, unrequited lovers, unhappy jealous ones; or (Anita's bogey) recruiters of naive youth. The emphasis in *Word Is Out* is on emotionally stable and fulfilled individuals or couples. But the question of choice could have been presented more as the two-sided issue it still is.

Most intriguing and least satisfying in the final section of the film, "Where From Here?" We hear individual answers: creating a satisfying home life one day at a time within the reconstituted couple; casual sex with no lasting emotional commitments; lesbian separatism (although the San Francisco State College professor who discusses it admits it is impossible); expressions of collective pride, e.g., the San Francisco police vs. gay's baseball

game; an all-women's folk/blues group; an all-male rock group; the New York Gay Parade.

None of the interviewees presents an expressly political, much less a socialist analysis. But the filmmakers are aware of the context of the movement. (One member of the group, Nancy Adair, is a veteran of the Vercermos Brigade.) And the film concludes with a scene that projects the strength of collective consciousness. Some of the interviewees, whose faces are by now like those of old friends, are joyfully marching in the 1977 San Francisco Gay Parade behind a sign that quotes a Catholic priest in Nazi Germany:

*When they came for the Jews, I said nothing.*

*When they came for the gays, I said nothing.*

*When they came for me, there was nobody left to say anything.*

*Word Is Out* is a film for straights, for gays, for anyone concerned with human rights. Watch for it in New York and other East Coast cities in February, Los Angeles in March, later in the Midwest.

—Rhoda Beck

Rhoda Beck is a free-lance writer in Madison, Wisconsin.

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## MUSIC

# Musician-in-exile expresses his people's aspirations in jazz

Much of the connection between music and politics depends on the individual musician. Since music and politics are both realms in which humans live, think and act, any music will have implications which overlap into the "political." However, to the extent that the musician him/herself is conscious of these connections, the process takes on extra dimensions.

Pianist Ndikho Xaba is very aware of the political meanings of his music. Born in South Africa, he came to the U.S. in 1964 "out of necessity," and has remained in exile here since. He has lived, played and taught in New York, Houston, San Francisco, Provi-

dence, and (now) Washington, D.C..

In California he recorded an album, "Ndikho and the Natives" (Trilite). But despite his power as a player and the respect he commands from other musicians, he is able to find work only irregularly (mainly in Washington and New York), and must rely on street-vending to make ends meet.

In Africa, music is an integral part of the life of the society to a much greater degree than in the West. Music accompanies daily activities and has a function in their performance. It is thus logical that a musician of African origin would be particularly aware of his music's ramifications in

spheres beyond craftsmanship. "To me," Ndikho says, "music is the highest form of politics."

The basis of this is the levels of communication that music can establish. "With music you're able to communicate with anybody, irrespective of race, irrespective of language." That communication is on an abstract level which goes beyond the more tangible forms through which humans interact. It reaches people because it touches directly on very real things that are going on within and without them. "A true musician knows which buttons to push for certain reactions; it's a science."

What is being transmitted through the sound is the vibrations and attitudes the musician feels. These things are of a fundamental nature, the bases for human interaction with the physical, spiritual and social universe. Here is where the music's "politics" come in: it matters profoundly what it is that is being communicated on this abstract plane. "As musicians we know what sound is good for us—there's negative music and positive music."

"My home setting in Africa is socialistic; though we're living under a capitalistic system we're socialists at heart, we can't break away from this." And how is this felt in the music? "This is where the beauty of coming from a socialist upbringing comes in—you cannot project anything which is against that type of society."

In other words, principles such as cooperation, harmony, and (responsibly exercised) freedom of expression are naturally put forth. Music such as this can assist in the building and operation



"As musicians we know what sound is good for us—there's negative music and positive music...."

of a positive society because that requires the personal incorporation of such an outlook by large numbers of people. It also contrasts with the bulk of commercially-produced music in the U.S., where "the entrepreneurs exploit the musicians and make them play negative music."

In the hands of a musician like Ndikho Xaba, the connection to what is commonly known as politics also can become more direct, although we are still talking about something much larger and more fundamental than stances on specific issues. Rather, "as an artist I am a representative of a people—I must represent their aspirations."

That which his music attempts to communicate has to do with those best aspects of people's potential—as individuals and as a society—and with their struggle to realize them. This means that

when he perceives a concrete political situation to be an obstacle in that struggle, he may attempt, through his music, to focus people's attention on that as well.

Such is the case with the present state of affairs in South Africa. "My concern is to be informative about the situation at home, about the situation in the world at large; to be educational."

It is a shame that musicians such as Ndikho Xaba are so well hidden from the public—and this despite their great commitment to share their ideas. Those of us who do become aware of this music, and are concerned with developing the way of life that is essential to socialism would do well to avail ourselves of all it has to offer and teach.

—John Kordalewski

John Kordalewski has a jazz program on WGTB-FM in Washington, D.C.



## CLASSIFIED

THE SOCIALIST TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY—a talk by Martin J. Sklar, associate editor, IN THESE TIMES. Tues., March 7, 8:45 pm, Parson Library Auditorium, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL. The public is invited, admission free.

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# Records



Lenny Bruce

Drawing by David Levine. Reprinted with permission of New York Review of Books. 1975. NYREV, INC.

## 25 YEARS OF RECORDED COMEDY

(Warner Brothers)

Gary Owens (a veteran comedian in his own right) writes in the albums notes for *25 Years of Recorded Comedy* that it reflects "the changing trends in comedy ... from slapstick to socially relevant to political lampoon to good old bizarre." Maybe so. But the impression left on this reviewer is that American comedy has changed only superficially in a quarter of a century, that it is now, as it has been since the beginning, socially relevant satire.

Perhaps it is the function of comedy anywhere and anytime to sink its teeth into the hind leg of some sacred cow and hold on till the laughter hurts. Certainly that has been true of American comedy from the time of the Revolution when the leg belonged to King George.

In *25 Years of Recorded Comedy* the victims of the satirical assault include:

- Presidents (Kennedy and Nixon)
- organized religion and its executives (from Billy Graham to the late Pope)
- bureaucracies (governmental and commercial)
- monopolies (chiefly the telephone company which gets it on both legs, once by Lily Tomlin; once by Mike Nichols and Elaine May)
- racists (in high and low places)
- advertising
- educational establishments (public and parochial)
- and the prevailing moral (sic) climate.

The tone of the assault becomes more uninhibited as we move from Eddie Lawrence's Old Philosopher to Lenny Bruce and Richard Pryor. But the difference is less a reflection of a change in the comedian's objective than a measure of what audiences are able to absorb. (We are clearly getting over the effects of the Hayes code.)

Gary Owens also notes that the collection is a "pastiche," and

there is not arguing with that judgment.

The six sides contain samples of an impressive list of artists, beginning with Stan Freberg and company and finishing with the National Lampoon. There are some interesting omissions from the roster, including both Steve and Woody Allen, George Carlin, Bill Cosby, Dick Gregory and Mort Sahl. (Owens' notes imply that there were contractual problems with most of them.)

Included, besides those already named, are David Frye, Vaughn Meader, Shelley Berman, Johnathan Winters, Bill Dana, Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks, the Fire-sign Theatre and the unwilling participants in "Pardon My Bloopers"—a culling of "classic flubs from the great days of radio."

The trouble with the pastiche is not that the chosen don't represent the best comedy of the last 25 years, but that the samples don't always represent the comedians' best. The most obvious case in point is Stan Freberg, who was the first of this generation of satirists to go after really big game.

His "Green Christmas" is so mordant an analysis of the merchandizers and became a collectors' item because of its rarity. His "Incident at Los Voraces" is an almost unbearably caustic parable about the arms race, brilliantly conceived and produced—and unobtainable today. And there are plenty of other Freberg classics, any one of which would have been a better choice than "St. George and the Dragonet," a good-humored parody of a television series long since retired from the tube.

Other performers fare better. Shelly Berman's anguished attempt to cut through the red tape of a large department store to rescue a woman hanging from a ledge outside the lingerie department is one of his best. And Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks' improvisation of the "L.M.N.O.P. Ad Agency" is super.

But the last cut of all is the most significant. "Deteriorata" is the National Lampoon's rewrite of "Desiderata," a sententious document allegedly found on the wall of an old Maryland church and reproduced for framing almost as often as the "Praying Hands."

It comes on with ominous organ chords over which a group of sopranos (on echo mike) inform the listener that "You are a fluke of the universe..." At an appropriate moment Norman Rose's baritone begins to drop pearls of wisdom, among which are—

*Go placidly amid the noise and  
waste and remember what  
comfort there may be in  
owning a piece of the same....  
Know what to kiss and when.  
Consider that two wrongs never  
make a right, but three do.  
Whenever possible, put people  
on hold....  
Try at all times to bend, forward,  
spindle or mutilate....  
With all its hopes, dreams and  
urban renewal, the world con-  
tinues to deteriorate.  
Give up!*

But the existence of such persistent and penetrating self-criticism is one good reason for not doing that. —Janet Stevenson

### TERENCE BOYLAN

Terence Boylan  
(Asylum)

If you have begun to think that the Eagles have abandoned their soaring harmonies for "life in the fast lane" of less melodic, harder rock, and that Jackson Browne's *Running on Empty* shows him finally sputtering to a halt, then look again. Here comes Terence Boylan, latest heir to the Southern California laid-back sound. Boylan is the most recent in Asylum Record's string of Los Angeles soft rockers (the list includes Browne, Eagles, Ronstadt, Southern, etc.). But he is also a compelling artist on his own.

*Terence Boylan* is his new solo album, although not technically his first effort. In the mid-'60s,



Terence Boylan

Verve/Forecast released his *Alias Boona*, an interesting yet undistinguished album. But that was long ago, and went nowhere; this release is really a debut. And it is a fine debut indeed.

On every front, Boylan proves himself a master of the style. His own production has utilized sparse electric instrumentation while he strums his acoustic. Some of L.A.'s most prestigious studio musicians (like Jim Gordon on drums, Russ Kunkel and Leland Sklar) provide the backup, while Poco's Timothy Schmit adds harmony vocals on almost every tune.

Interestingly, Boylan's lyrics often hint at repressed sexuality in the same way that the music hints at the power of the electric instruments. "Shake It" is an ode to high schools girls, cast as sexual teasers who "give the boys something to dream on later." And "Shame" remembers fantasies of shopkeepers and little girls in its innuendoes of guilt without sex. In "Rain King" a pleasantly rolling tune, Boylan trades his double-knits for primitive African sensuality under Victoria Falls. Finally, in an upbeat way, "Where Are You Hiding?" in-

ferentially connects witchcraft and unrepressed sexuality.

But Boylan is at his best when he leaves his sexual politics at the recording studio door. "Sundown of Fools" is soft and light while "Hey Papa" playfully invites Hemingway to return to the South Seas, forgetting "what they done to your daughters and sons." And "Trains" which closes the album is a light, largely acoustic ballad with compelling lyrics and fine piano runs by David Paich.

Like the best of its genre, Boylan's strengths rest on soothing melodies and polished harmonies coupled with gentle upbeat rhythms. But such strengths can also weaken the music. The sweetness can often become saccharine, the polished sheen can outshine the underlying structure. It can get so laid back, you can fall asleep.

Fortunately, Boylan does not succumb to these trappings often; they lurk on the periphery of each cut. This album is very good, and shows even greater promise.

Michael S. Kimmel is a graduate student in Berkeley.

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# 'Gonna getcha every time'

By Barry Codell

**O**F COURSE THERE'S NO REAL prejudice existing against short people," says Randy Newman in response to the furor his satiric hit, "Short People," has generated.

Six feet and under basketball midgets can testify differently though. The National Basketball Association has only recently begun to perceive that their ilk may be able to compete safely in the "Land of the Giants."

This season the select group of Liliputs, led by Houston's Calvin Murphy, Cleveland's Fouts Walker, and Chicago's Wilbur Holland, have added the *piece de resistance* to their cause—a 29-year-old rookie from the Atlanta Hawks, Charlie Criss.

The darts and dashes of this 5'7" late bloomer have taken the little man's skills out of the hardwood closet and into the softening hearts of NBA coaches. As Newman's song says, Criss will "get you every time!"

Averaging a healthy 11 points and four assists per game as a backup guard, while pacing the league in unbridled enthusiasm and gum-chewing, Criss has helped boost average Hawk attendance by almost 4,000 fans per contest. Atlanta fans go wild as he enters the game to the organist's "Theme from Rocky," and magically ignites the Hawk fast break.

Criss' story does have the proper Hol-

lywood improbability. One of 11 children growing up in Yonkers, N.Y., his court sense led him to New Mexico State University where, a playmaker, he directed the Aztecs to the 1970 NCAA semi-finals.

## Half a foot too short.

Upon graduation, neither the NBA or ABA gave Criss a second thought. "At least a half a foot too short" was the immediate and seemingly final consensus. He watched his backcourt running mate, Jimmy Collins, sign an instant-riches contract as the first round draft pick of the NBA Bulls. Collins, 6'2" All American guard, lasted two uneventful years on the Chicago bench.

Charlie Criss, meanwhile, took to the playgrounds and the semi-professional trail.

He joined the Hartford Capitals of the Eastern League in 1972, a league specializing in "race horse basketball," i.e., running and shooting. Composed of NBA hopefuls and rejects, the league had little use for Criss, labeled as purely a passer. He practiced with the Capitals all season, but performed in only four of their 28 games.

In the succeeding campaigns Criss, renowned solely for his lack of physical stature, began to grow on the Eastern Leaguers. He averaged 20 points per contest as a sixth man.

Needing only playing time, he paced the Eastern League the following three

years, averaging 30, 39, and 34 points per encounter.

On the sidewalks of New York his name was turning mythic. In the famous inner city Rucker League he became known as the Mosquito, as stories spread of Criss besting NBA hot shots such as Nate Archibald and Lloyd Free on the city's blacktops.

Still, Criss was eminently aware, this was not the NBA. The Eastern League salary was \$60 a game. The Mosquito paid his own expenses and split gas money with teammates as they drove long hours to their games. He switched jobs constantly—the last as a data processor—to support himself and two daughters.

Criss received his first NBA training camp invitation in 1976, but the New York Knickerbockers released him before the first exhibition game. The invitation was seen mainly as a favor to his agent, an attorney who doubled as Eastern League Commissioner.

## An Atlanta chance.

Disappointed, Criss had decided before the '77-78 season that he would not return to the Eastern League. He tried out for the Harlem Globetrotters, joining their stooge team, the New Jersey Reds, during the Trotters' summer European trip. At the tour's finale Atlanta coach Hubie Brown called Criss to report to the Hawks' training grounds.

Brown, himself an Eastern Leaguer for four years during the '50s, had re-

called the quickness and intensity Criss had displayed during a black charities All Star game in Madison Square Garden.

To Criss' utter amazement his ship had finally docked in NBA waters. His willingness to accept the League minimum salary had meshed well with owner Ted Turner's economy drive, and Coach Brown wagered his lumbering team could find room for the speedy Mosquito.

The Hawks leapt from the starting gate with an eight out of nine skein, and Criss wowed their afficianados with inspired play, including two 20-point fourth quarter splurges. The penultimate moment of his seven-year exodus to the basketball Ritz may have occurred in an early season game with Kansas City.

Charlie hypnotized 7'3" Tom Burleson with a patented Mosquito move and then, one-on-one, arched a bank shot over the King center. The NBA's tallest player had paid the price of shortsightedness against Charlie Criss.

While the Hawks have settled from their lofty standing, the oldest rookie in NBA history has shown he can withstand the punishing pro schedule. His calm reaction: "I'm not bitter about the seven year wait. I feel I have a lot to prove."

## Holland and Murphy.

Criss' ascendancy to Hawk stardom was ironic, since they had released 6' Wilbur Holland the previous year. Holland was

*Continued on page 20.*